MY DEAR WELLS

Henry Arthur Jones

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MY DEAR WELLS

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

PATRIOTISM AND POPULAR EDUCATION

With some Thoughts upon English work and English play, our evening amusements, Shakespeare and the condition of our theatres, slang, children on the stage, the training of actors, English politics, before the War, national training for national defence, war and design in nature, the League of Nations, the future world policy of America, capital and labour, religion, reconstruction, the great commandments, social prophets and social prophecy, competition and co-operation, the biologist and the social reformer, hand labour and brain labour, school teachers and ragpickers, internationalism, and many other interesting matters.

The whole discourse being in the form of a letter addressed to

THE RIGHT HON. H. A. L. FISHER
President of the British Board of Education

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H. G. Wells (to starving Russian novelist): Your condition is deplorable, but at least you have the satisfaction of knowing that you have abolished private property.

MY DEAR WELLS

BEING A SERIES OF LETTERS ADDRESSED BY

HENRY ARTHUR JONES

TO MR. H. G. WELLS
UPON BOLSHEVISM, COLLECTIVISM,
INTERNATIONALISM, AND THE
DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH

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PREFACE.

My main object in writing this book has been to examine the soundness of the arguments which a popular writer uses in urging us to break up the present social order, and incidentally and consequentially to break up the British Empire. I have set myself to test the quality of his thinking, the texture of his reasoning, to question the value of his judgment. Before proceeding to make such fundamental changes in our social system as must immeasurably involve the destinies of hundreds of millions of mankind, before even considering the advisability of making these changes, it may save us much trouble if we first ask for credentials from those who advocate them. What are their qualifications for advising us on these supreme matters?

In a London journal of the widest circulation, an enthusiastic admirer of Mr. Wells recently claimed that he possessed an almost superhuman sagacity and foresight in dealing with the social and political problems of our time. All through the war and since, Mr. Wells has diagnosed the world situation almost month by month, has laid out vast International schemes, has counselled various policies to

the world's statesmen and rulers, has issued manifestoes and forecasts innumerable. Looking round upon the world today, how do its salient facts and conditions accord with the successive estimates and forecasts which Mr. Wells has made? How many of his forecasts have been fulfilled? His enthusiastic admirer acclaimed Mr. Wells as "the man who saw things coming." How many of the things that Mr. Wells "saw coming" have actually come to pass? How many of the tremendous things that have actually come to pass, did Mr. Wells "see coming"?

Before pulling the British Empire to pieces, we may surely take the precaution to ask what authority of careful thought and stability of informed judgement, are possessed by those who are seeking to draw us into these vast and irrevocable commitments. We have among us a group of "thinkers" and writers whom I call "The Haters of England." They always "think" against their own country. If there is sedition and revolt in any part of the Empire, they stir it up. If there is trouble and unrest at home, they foment it. Most of them are active fervent Internationalists with respect to their own country, but with respect to any country that is embroiled with England, they are active fervent Patriots. During the war they were worth many army corps to Germany. Now that the war has left us a legacy of new insecurities and perils, now

that it is a first necessity that our nation should gather itself in one great unity of aim and effort to ward off disaster, these haters of England are busy spreading disaffection and disunion both in our internal and in our foreign affairs.

Mr. Wells is one of the most popular and influentials of these "thinkers" and writers who "think" and write against England. It has been my chief endeavour in the following pages, to test the quality of his "thinking", its fibre and cogency, to demand his credentials that they may be *vizéed* by the final court of appeal.

The series of papers entitled "Russia in the Shadows" which Mr. Wells has recently published, afforded me the chance to examine his views upon Bolshevism, and to dissect the arguments by which he accorded to it a general and sympathetic support. My replies to those papers, which originally appeared in the "London Evening Standard" and the "New York Sunday Times," are here reprinted, and form the substance of the first eight letters in this volume. The situation in Russia has changed considerably in the last few months, but this does not in the least affect the quality of Mr. Wells's thinking and arguments, nor of my criticism of them.

The enthusiastic admirer of Mr. Wells, in the same article that I have quoted, made the further claim on his behalf—"Wells today is thinking for half Europe."

It is daily becoming more painfully evident that the great masses of the people in all countries are unable, or are too much occupied, to think for themselves upon any question that requires them to pursue a train of abstract and exact reasoning. They are only too glad to escape from so prolonged and painful an effort, and to get their thinking done for them by professional thinkers for other people. When this vicarious thinking is analysed, much of it is found to be a flatulent compound of vasty vague phrases and enticing catch-words. These are put into general circulation and passed from mouth to mouth, flattering the self-esteem of the users by giving them the illusion that they are solving difficult social and political problems. How many of those who used the phrase "making the world safe for democracy" asked themselves what it meant? By dint of constantly repeating it, men grew to believe that they were putting an end to war.

My secondary and ancillary object in writing this book has been to test the value and soundness of this vicarious thinking that is being turned out in such wholesale quantities by its accredited purveyors for its millions of consumers. In the "London Sunday Express" of December 20, 1920, Mr. Wells replied to Mr. Winston Churchill in a paper called "The Anti-Bolshevik Mind." In itself Mr. Wells's paper is of no great account, and the circumstances of its publication may be dismissed. But in "The

Anti-Bolshevik Mind" Mr. Wells offered, what seemed to me, a characteristic and extensive illustration of loose and confused "thinking" for other people. In this respect it has a permanent illuminating interest for people who think for themselves. For this reason, and from this point of view, I have minutely dissected "The Anti-Bolshevik Mind" from beginning to end, almost sentence by sentence.

Further, in the course of that paper, Mr. Wells advanced and exploited his theories to such a length that he gave me the chance of examining each of his cardinal tenets and doctrines upon its merits. Concurrently then, and without digressing from the main and secondary objects which I had in view, I have in the following pages inquired into the possibilities of Collectivism and Internationalism as workable forms of government, and also into the eternally perplexing problem of the distribution of Wealth. In the ninth letter onwards, I have disputed with Mr. Wells on all these closely interknit questions.

I hope my readers will find throughout these letters an underchain of carefully sustained argument, and thereupon I finally rest my case. But in forming their opinions upon all these supreme matters, the great majority of men are guided, not so much by argument, however clear and irrefragable, as by their sympathies, emotions, and prejudices, and chiefly by their immediate individual or class in-

terests. They believe not what facts tell them, but what they wish to believe.

Mr. Wells's theories appear to me to be not only inconsistent, ill considered, and unworkable, but apart from the tragic mischief and misery they may cause, they present themselves to me as a bundle of crazy but delightfully amusing absurdities. In many passages throughout these letters, I have adopted a tone and method of controversy which is perhaps not to be commended for general imitation, but which may prove to be the most effectual for achieving the objects I have in view. Those objects are of such magnitude and importance that I should not hesitate to use any form of controversy which might best serve to call attention to them, and best serve to arrest and persuade the nine out of ten of us who are impatient of solemn formal argument. If any reader thinks that I have occasionally been a little careless of the courtesies of controversy, I beg him to remember that ridicule is sometimes the most penetrating and most conclusive form of argument.

For the reasons I have given, I hope these letters may be found to have something more than the ephemeral interest which attaches to a sterile personal controversy on some passing question of the day, whose flavour the next morning is as stale as the dead end of a half-smoked cigar.

If we are to overturn the present social order,

and break up the British Empire, let us first be sure of our grounds, and let those who can think for themselves, search into the credentials of those who are thinking for other people, and who are popularly accepted as qualified advisers on matters of life or death to our nation and to all civilised mankind.

HENRY ARTHUR JONES.

March 30, 1921.
New York City.

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

MY DEAR WELLS was practically ready for publication three months ago or more. The Publishers hesitated to put the book before the public, however, owing to objections raised by Mr. H. G. Wells to the accuracy of some of its supposed statements.

A copy of the book was at once forwarded to Mr. Wells by the Publishers for his examination, with an offer to withhold the volume from publication if Mr. Wells would point out any matter therein which was either untrue or libelous or which offended in any way against good taste.

Having had from Mr. Wells no answer to or acknowledgment of their offer, they feel that there is now no longer any reason for postponing publication of this exceedingly important critical examination of Mr. Wells' theories.

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New York
October 31st, 1921.

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

These letters were written during the autumn and winter of 1920-1921.

The earlier ones appeared in the *London Evening Standard* and the *New York Sunday Times*. The author gratefully acknowledges his indebtedness to the editors of these journals for their permission to publish them in this volume.

New York, N. Y.
April 4, 1921.

MY DEAR WELLS

" 'E dunnow where 'e are."
Popular English Music-hall Song

"I'll tickle your catastrophe."
Falstaff, Henry IV, Part II

MY DEAR WELLS

LETTER ONE.

MR. WELLS WILL TAKE A TRIP TO RUSSIA.

My Dear Wells,—

In a recent article in a morning journal, which, I am sure, must have caused you that intense annoyance which we all feel when we find ourselves injudiciously praised in the newspapers—in that article the inspired writer, after an ascription to you of a sovereign comprehension of human affairs, and a superhuman sagacity in dealing with them, went on to declare that "Wells to-day is thinking for half Europe."

Mr. Archibald Spofforth, who was reading the article aloud to me, put it down at this point and very ungraciously muttered, "Now we know why Europe is in such a mess."

I am afraid that Spofforth is incurably prejudiced against you. I told him bluntly that he was guilty of over-statement. I would not allow that you are entirely responsible for the disorders and delusions

of thought that are everywhere gnawing at the foundations of ordered government, and driving the peoples towards civil war and anarchy.

I was, however, obliged to admit that your advocacy of Bolshevism as the way of salvation for mankind, your laudation of its leaders as farseeing statesmen, "shining clear," "profoundly wise," immeasurably more competent to guide the destinies of a nation than such "pretentious bluffers" as Mr. Balfour and Lord Robert Cecil—I was obliged to admit to Spofforth that if you are indeed thinking for that very large number of people in Europe who are unable to think for themselves, you are likely to lead them to great disaster.

And now you are going to Russia to find out the facts for yourself. Is that necessary?

We have abundant information about the state of that country. A great cloud of faithful witnesses have brought us full and unimpeachable evidence. Who in England except yourself is unacquainted with Russian conditions? Who except yourself has not too full and too dreadful a knowledge of the terror that reigns there; all the securities and sanctities of civilised life abolished; all the spiritual and all the material possessions of the people seized and escheated, and scattered in the equality of the dust; sweated labour, gagged and fettered against all complaints and strikes, driven to its daily twelve-hour treadmill; a ruthless militarism, more brutal than

the German, hounding its ragged, famished hordes to destroy Western civilisation; a junta of desperadoes coining the blood of wretched peasants into gold to send to England to blind and drug our workmen, and to raise them into insurrection against their own means of livelihood; the very shadow and memory of Liberty banished from the land—since this old earth spun on its axis, has ever such a cry and tale of horror gone up to heaven, or has heaven looked down upon such a bloody, sickening spectacle of man's inhumanity to man?

These are the facts about Russia, my dear Wells. And you will go there and ascertain them for yourself.

You have compared our own rulers with the leaders of Bolshevism. You have found our English statesmen to be "ignorant and limited men"—"crudely ignorant of the world of modern ideas."

The world of modern ideas!

In Russia you will find your world of modern ideas in full working operation. When you come back I would like to have a little talk with you about your world of modern ideas.

It is not by your modern ideas that the Russian people will be dragged out of their putrid cesspool of famine, pestilence and anarchy. It is only by the observance of those great unchanging rules of life and conduct, those sovereign laws of communal and national well-being, eternally fixed, and as old as the

world itself, whereby through all time past nations have established themselves in peace and prosperity and happiness—it is only by obedience to these unchanging, primal laws that Russia will be rescued from her long agony, and that England will be arrested in her progress towards social rebellion and civil war.

You have been so much occupied with your modern ideas, my dear Wells, that I fear you have forgotten the existence of these great primal laws. Yet they shine aloft like stars. When you come back from Russia I should like to bring them to your attention, and to challenge you to deny their operation.

It is claimed for you that you are "thinking for half Europe." Ah, they need somebody to think for them, these blind, helpless, tortured masses!

But I do most frankly question your competence to think for those who are unable to think for themselves. In my "Patriotism and Popular Education" I examined in detail your scheme for the International Government of Africa. You will remember that you regenerated the whole continent in five minutes by giving it an International Constitution on paper. It was all so easy—on paper.

By some such means I suppose you will regenerate Russia. You will find it equally easy—on paper.

Well, go to Russia.

Yet I could wish that you had chosen England for

your spiritual home rather than Russia. What is it that drives you and so many Englishmen to hate this dear, kind, blundering, stupid Mother of ours?

You have declared your preference for Russia and Bolshevism. I once knew a man who had a good cellar of rich vintage wines in his own house. Yet, instead of drawing upon it, he would go tippling at dirty little public-houses. I knew another man who had a sweet, pretty, faithful little wife, yet, instead of staying at home with her, he would go after draggled creatures in the streets.

Well, go to Russia. Let us have some further speech when you come back.

Your faithful, and I hope not too candid, friend,

HENRY ARTHUR JONES.

P. S.—If I were you, I wouldn't let your friends credit you with too much capacity for thinking for other people. Spofforth, who is always at my elbow with *mal-à-propos* suggestions, has just remarked that if you are thinking for half Europe, it doesn't leave you much time to think for yourself.

16th September, 1920.

Mr. Wells replied to the above letter, and some further correspondence passed, the general tenor of which may be gathered from Letter 2.

LETTER TWO.

MR. WELLS PACKS UP AND STARTS.

My Dear Wells,—

I accept such terms as "liar," "excited imbecile," "silly ranter," "hasty, ill-trained mind," and the other elegancies of epithet which you apply to me—I accept them most cordially, most gratefully, as evidences of your method of controversy. I will treasure them and pay them the same respect that I pay to your social philosophy.

To come to the facts. You accuse me of twisting and garbling your statements because I quoted you as saying that the Bolshevist leaders are "shining clear" and "profoundly wise." You don't deny that you did call them "shining clear;" but you explained that this applied only to the one matter of making peace with the Hohenzollerns. It is strange that you should applaud them in this matter, when at the most critical period of the war you were urging us to make peace with undefeated Germany under the Hohenzollerns. You will remember I had to curb your zeal when you advised England to throw herself on the neck of her undefeated enemy.

So you say that the Bolshevist leaders were "shining clear" on this one point only. In that matter, if indeed they were shining clear, I gladly allow that they were far more "shining clear" than yourself.

You do not seem to qualify your praise of them as "profoundly wise," or to limit your admiration for them in that respect. You impute dishonesty to me because I took the general sense and tenor of your article, and did not, in a limited space, deal minutely with every particular. I am ready to deal minutely with every one of these minor points, these qualifications of your plain statements—if the editor of the "Evening Standard" thinks it worth while to give me the space to vex the public any further with them.

Meantime I repeat with the utmost emphasis that I can employ, that your entire article is one continued laudation of the Bolshevist leaders, and their far-seeing statesmanship, to the depreciation of our English statesmen. Will you face that simple issue? It is the only main issue that I raised in my letter. I now put it again to you in the plainest way.

Your article in the "Daily Mail" of January 15, 1918, is easily accessible. You do not abjure it. You defend and even reinforce it. I invite and request the fullest comparison of that article with my letter to you in the "Evening Standard" of September 16, 1920.

If by dint of argument, persuasion, search, adver-

tisement, or by any other means you can find one single man in this country who, having read your article and my comment upon it, will come forward and say that, on the great main issue that I have raised, I have misrepresented you, or unfairly stated your opinion of the Bolshevist leaders—if you can find such a man and bring him forward, why, in that case, my dear Wells, I will pay him the same attention that I am paying to you. I will deal with him candidly, as I am dealing with you—and even more exhaustively.

After all your depreciation of English statesmen and diplomatists as "pretentious bluffers" ("Daily Mail," January 30, 1918), "crudely ignorant persons" guilty of vast general incompetence in managing our national affairs, it seems that your chief indictment against them, the head and front of their offending, is that our Ambassador in St. Petersburg did not know Russian. If you will inquire I think that you will find that, with one or two rare exceptions, no foreign Ambassador in St. Petersburg has known Russian. It is not a great matter, except in your estimation. Disraeli did not know French. That did not prevent him being a great diplomatist. Will you kindly look up the point about foreign Ambassadors knowing Russian? As it is your main charge against English statesmanship, you may as well take care to stand upon firm ground.

Another point. You claimed that the Bolshevist

leaders were "trying to end aggressive militarism in the world forever." They believe that they can do this by mental work, by propaganda—that is, by words. Isn't that the fundamental fallacy of Internationalists and Pacifists? They think they can govern and regenerate the world by a committee, by International paper constitutions, such as the one you devised for the government and regeneration of the continent of Africa. It is so easy—on paper.

And now, my dear Wells, I must not detain you any further. You are busy packing up for Russia. Let us have some further speech on all these matters when you come back.

Your sincere well wisher,

HENRY ARTHUR JONES.

P. S.—By the way, you ask me if I don't think that the Bolshevists are "straight." No, I don't, my dear Wells. Do you? In that case I do homage to the generous simplicity of your mind. But perhaps we attach different meanings to the word "straight."

17th September, 1920.

To this letter Mr. Wells made the strange reply that I did not understand the use of inverted commas, and that therefore discussion with me was impossible. When Mr. Wells is pressed home in argument, his retort is apt to be inscrutable and incoherent. H. A. J.

LETTER THREE.

MR. WELLS FINDS ORDER IN PETROGRAD.

My Dear Wells,—

So you are back in England. I thought it possible that you might be offered some high advisory post in Russia, which your love of Bolshevist Government would constrain you to accept. For in that country your International theories are being translated into facts, and the general condition of affairs seems to call for constant superintendence from yourself.

You have returned to our shores, and in an interview you tell us that you have had a very interesting time. It looks likely that we are going to have a very interesting time in England, and something of the same sort of interesting time that they are having in Russia.

I notice that you summarise the conditions in Russia in four words: "Hunger, want, but order." This seems to imply that if only order is maintained the hunger and the want are matters of secondary importance. What we are concerned to know is: "How much hunger? How much want?" and above

all: "What kind of order prevails in Russia to-day?"

We have evidence heaped mountain high that the hunger and want in Russia are unimaginable in their horror and their extent; that marasmus and pestilence are sweeping the land, and are only dwindling as the dwindling population offers them fewer victims. Tell me, what is the population of Petrograd * to-day compared with its population before the war? What will it be when its doomed inhabitants have paid their further toll to frost and starvation in the coming winter? Will you dismiss these questions as negligible and impertinent in view of the dominating fact that "order" reigns in Petrograd?

What kind of order? You say: "We have been rather amused to read of disturbances and insurrections." Who are the "we" who were "amused" to read of disturbances and insurrections? You and Lenin? Or is the whole population of Petrograd rocking with laughter at the bare idea of disturbances and insurrections in their well-ordered and disciplined city? You will scarcely say that disturbances and insurrections have not taken place. Rather serious ones, eh? Not only in Petrograd, but all over the land, plunging the whole population in terror, misery, bloodshed, and ruin, and sacrificing countless thousands of innocent lives? But

* It has recently been estimated that the present population of Petrograd (March, 1921) is not much over a third of the population in 1914.

those disturbances and insurrections have been subdued. Now that order reigns, the very thought of them is amusing. . . . O vastly amusing, damnably amusing, I should say.

What kind of order? How was it established? How is it maintained?

You return to England in good time. Will you tell the workers of England—those workers, many of whom were two years ago in the trenches, ready to die for you and for me—will you tell the workers of England that the order now maintained in Petrograd is the kind of order that you desire them to live under? An enforced twelve-hour day, on wages on starvation level; the right to strike, nay, the right to murmur or complain denied them under pain of death; free speech more cruelly suppressed and punished than under the worst tyranny the earth has known—will you tell the workers of England that this is the kind of order you wish them to establish in our own country?

Be sure that it is the kind of order which inevitably follows any attempt to govern a country upon international proletarian principles. Do you recommend it to us at the present moment?

How was this order established in Russia? By machine-guns at every strategic point; by shooting every one who opposed; by wholesale robbery, massacre, and imprisonment; by inflicting transcend-

ent agonies and privations upon the whole people; by crimes and infamies and cruelties innumerable, indescribable, beyond all picturing.

Do you still advise the workers of England to establish international order in this country by these methods? For by no other methods can it be established. Oh, be very sure of that!

How is this order maintained? By the more and more rigorous employment of the same methods whereby it was established. Did you read the speech of Comrade Martoff at the conference of German Socialists a few days ago? He dared to arraign this order established in Petrograd, to proclaim it as a bloody, pitiless despotism, the devilish gaoler and destroyer of Russian liberty and national hope and life.

That is how order is maintained in Petrograd.

Comrade Martoff has had a much longer and closer experience than yourself of this order that reigns in Petrograd. He has lived and suffered under it, and knows it through and through. You were in Russia something just over a fortnight, I believe. You will claim that, with your astonishing capacity for formulating political theories, and imposing them upon mankind, a fortnight is ample time for you to get a grip of the whole situation, and to shape a nation's destinies accordingly.

If it came to a pinch, and I knew you were in good

form, I would back you to bring out a new Constitution, or a new religion, for any country or continent, in less than a week. Don't distrust yourself. I know you can do it. Why, a year or two ago you whipped out a brand new International Constitution for the whole continent of Mid-Africa in a fortnight. It is true that it was a paper Constitution, and that it wouldn't work for five minutes. Still, you did it. It is true, also, that your International Constitution for Mid-Africa illustrated the fundamental and eternal fallacies of International government and was in itself a perfect little cameo condemnation of Internationalism. Do you wish me to re-examine it and prove this statement?

To return to Comrade Martoff and the order that reigns in Petrograd. Comrade Martoff, seemingly a good Socialist and Internationalist like yourself, denounces and curses the order that reigns in Petrograd. He finds nothing amusing in it. But then he has lived under it, and you will allow that in the matter of lengthened observation and experience you are a mere week-end tripper compared with Comrade Martoff.

You had a very interesting time, you say, not without amusement. Among the interesting and amusing things you saw, did you acquaint yourself with the conditions of childbirth in Russia under the present order that reigns there? Did you happen to observe a dreadful type of baby that Russian

mothers are bringing into the world; starved in the womb, wizened, atrophied?

The babies are perishing by thousands, and those that miserably survive shall bear witness all their lives to the effects of the order that now reigns in Petrograd.

That order, you allow, is accompanied by hunger and want. You will scarcely counsel our English workers to embrace International theories for the sake of the hunger and want that they bring to the nations that put them into practice. But you seem to imply that the hunger and want must be endured for the sake of the order that is established under International government. On this point you have not yet made yourself clear. Indeed, you said: "I have seen so much that I have not yet digested what I have seen." Well, digest it as you may, humanity has not stomach for it.

However, it is announced that in a few days you will have digested what you saw in your fortnight's trip to Russia, and you are going to give us "one of the most thrilling narratives of recent years."

Already we have been "thrilled"—and re-thrilled, and over-thrilled, and thrilled again by what has happened in Russia. We have no further power of response to "thrills." What we are anxious to hear is whether your fortnight's trip to Russia leaves you to form the same opinion of the present Government that Comrade Martoff has formed with his

incomparably greater experience and opportunities of pronouncing a judgement upon it. Do you agree with Comrade Martoff, or do you not?

At this grave moment, when a large body of English workers are hesitating, would you counsel them to pay the same price for a revolution that the workers of Russia paid for it? Would you counsel them to pay a tenth, a hundredth part of that price? Answer me that.

For believe me, my dear Wells, some such price we shall have to pay for International proletarian Government if we have it in England.

As I have clearly shown—and I beg you to examine my arguments and to refute them if you can—there is but one question before every Englishman to-day—International or Patriotic Government. Every other question, social, industrial, financial, economic, political, falls into and is resolved in that one question. Till that primal, dividing question is finally decided by our nation we shall but toss and blindly defeat ourselves in ever-growing unrest, social disorder and social disintegration.

With regard to this one supreme question—International or Patriotic Government—and keeping in view the facts that you have learned in your fortnight's trip to Russia, where it is in full working operation, you have the proverbial choice of taking one of three courses:—

1. You can frankly declare that International

Proletarian Government is a hideous failure. Perhaps this is too much to expect from you at present. You will wait till further facts and disasters more clearly reveal it to you.

2. You can dodge the plain questions I have put to you, hedge a little bit, or a great deal, according as circumstances or your convictions may make it prudent or advisable for your reputation as a political thinker, who is thinking for half Europe.

3. You can triumphantly proclaim that International Proletarian Government is a success in Russia, and that the hunger and want which are inseparable from it are worth enduring for the sake of attaining the beneficent order that now reigns in Petrograd.

Which of these courses will you take?

When you left for Russia we were engaged in a controversy which you abruptly closed on the plea that I did not understand the use of inverted commas, and that therefore it was impossible to argue with me. I am quite willing to submit the matter of the inverted commas to any impartial judge of inverted commas. But I was under the impression that we were arguing about those great first principles of civilised government upon which the security and prosperity of all nations depend.

I am anxious to resume the controversy with you on these more important matters. Let it not distress you that you find it impossible to argue with me. I

will continue the controversy all alone, and will furnish the necessary arguments for us both. Au revoir.

HENRY ARTHUR JONES.

26th October, 1920.

LETTER FOUR.

STRANGE THINGS GET INTO MR. WELLS'S HEAD.

My Dear Wells,—

I hope that it will cause you a pleasurable emotion to know that the coal strike has delayed my departure from England for a few days. This enables us to keep in touch with each other, while I examine your opening account of what is happening in Russia.

I have never known a man so determined to expose the fallacies of Internationalism as yourself. You might have rested content with your masterly arraignment of International government in that wonderful paper Constitution you drew up for Mid-Africa, so full of an ironic significance—which perhaps you scarcely perceived. But having furnished us with an admirable theoretical condemnation of Internationalism, you proceed to make a trip to Russia in order to show us what Internationalism is like when it puts its theories into practice.

Your description of Russian conditions, sickening and heart-breaking as it is, adds nothing to what we knew of them. We have supped full of these horrors. They have been rehearsed to us *ad nauseam*

by scores of travellers and residents who have had a much longer, more vivid, more poignant experience of these dreadful realities than yourself. You might have stayed at home and verified the overwhelmng evidence already brought to us from Russia. But you would go there and see these things for yourself. Well, you have seen them, and you confirm our general knowledge of the hopeless misery, oppression, famine, disease, and despair that daily tighten their hold upon the masses of the Russian people.

We are all in substantial agreement about the facts. We accept your summary of them as correct, so far as it goes. No eye can survey the boundless misery and horror that prevail in Russia. No pen can describe them. Pity has drained her eyes, and has no more tears to shed. Let us make one shuddering guess at the illimitable dimensions of this abomination of the earth, and then take your description of it as a faint image of something too vast to comprehend, too monstrous to imagine.

With this impression in our minds, let us seek for some interpretation of the ghastly facts that you have related to us. How has the present condition of Russia been brought about?

In my last letter, I pointed out to you that you had a splendid chance of rehabilitating your reputation as a political thinker, by frankly declaring that International Proletarian Government has proved itself to be a hideous failure. I cannot but think

you would have been wise to take that chance. You would have had all the facts on your side. I own that I did not expect you would fall in with my suggestion. You have written so much to prove that International Government by the proletariat is the panacea for all the ills that afflict this planet, that it was too much to hope you would change your opinion, merely because it happened to be opposed to all the crying and salient facts.

Therefore I pointed out to you a second course. You could let yourself down gently, hedge and palter with this remorseless question that threatens to strangle every nation that cannot solve it aright, and that will allow no nation to have peace and security until it is solved. You have not definitely taken that second course.

I further pointed out to you that you had a third course—to proclaim boldly that International Proletarian Government had answered all your expectations, fulfilled all your prophecies, and that the present condition of Russia is a triumphant justification of your theories. In presence of the universal misery, bankruptcy, disease, and starvation that you have pictured you could scarcely take this third course. But in your recent paper you go as near to it as you dare. You evidently lean towards it, and you would whole-heartedly adopt it if it were not for the thousand damnable facts that thunder its refutation. So what do you do? You admit the

facts; indeed, you dilate and enlarge upon them; then you try to explain them away in a sense that is favourable to Bolshevist government.

Let us examine your explanation. You contend that the present terrible condition of Russia is not the result of Bolshevist rule, but of "Capitalism," "European Imperialism," and an "atrocious blockade."

You allow that Capitalism built the great cities of Russia. Under Communism their population has shrunk to about half its former numbers, is still diminishing, and is living in progressive misery and starvation. Further, the Communist Government is seeking to trade with England. Now that it has almost destroyed its own capital it is begging capitalist England to bring it capital to start its industries again.

With regard to Imperialism, which I am not here concerned to uphold, tell me what Imperial State has governed its helpless people with such ruthless tyranny and cruelty as the present rulers of Russia? Under what Imperial State has there been anything approaching such famished misery and universal impoverishment as you have lately witnessed. I ask you to explain by your theory, how it is that now Imperialism has been removed these terrible conditions are *progressive;* that they increase in severity and horror in the degree and according to the length of time that the Russian people are removed

from the consequences of Imperial Government, and as they pass under the rule of the present Government and live under the operation of Communist laws? Ponder this question, my dear Wells.

As for the blockade, without pressing the argument that it was necessary to stay the tide of Bolshevism from flooding Europe, it can scarcely be maintained that the privations and hunger caused by the blockade have been at all comparable with the privations and hunger caused by the Communist law, which forces the peasants to deliver food at regulated prices, and thus, by taking from them the reward of their labour, takes from them also all incentive to work when they have supplied their own wants. There is the master key of the situation in Russia, my dear Wells. It is in your own hands if you will but use it.

Now let us inquire upon whose shoulders you lay the blame for this frightful ruin of civilisation. Whom do you hold responsible? Obviously you cannot blame the present rulers of Russia, for that would condemn all your cherished theories. Besides, you have lauded them as "shining clear," "profoundly wise"—a model for our own statesmen. You are bound in honour and consistency to shield and absolve the Bolshevist leaders. Whom, then, will you choose for the scapegoats? You look round, and you fix upon the "vindictive French creditor" and the "journalistic British oaf." These,

you contend, are far more responsible than any Communist.

Ah, those "vindictive French creditors!" They have borne the brunt of the war, their land has been pillaged and devastated, and now they are so vindictive as to wish to be paid their just debts! God, what an outrage upon all sound Communistic principles!

And the "journalistic British oaf?" One of these journalistic British oafs has lately died from the effects of imprisonment in a Bolshevist prison. Well, at any rate, he has got his deserts. Serve him right, the oaf, for causing all this starvation and misery by daring to tell the truth about it! Let us hope you will now castigate the other journalistic oafs. Spare them not!

My dear Wells, could you not have made a better, or, at least, a more plausible selection of scapegoats? I know you were in a dilemma. You had to fix the responsibility for all this misery upon somebody. But do make another review of the whole situation. Bearing in mind that you are "thinking for half Europe," do you seriously affirm that the present terrible condition of Russia is in any measure due to the "vindictive French creditor" and the "journalistic British oaf?" If, after due consideration, you say that such is your honest belief, I entreat you to distrust your mental processes.

Why, my dear Wells, do you not perceive that this

filthy bog of misery, disease, starvation, and despair, wherein the Russian people grope and perish, is the very garden paradise of your International dreams, the land flowing with milk and honey whereto you and your fellow theorists have been leading them, and cheering them on to possess it? Now you have reached the promised land, you do not recognise it. It isn't in the least like the paradise you had mapped out in your head. The strange things that get into our heads!

I notice that you promise some further description of Russian conditions, so that we can "see and estimate the Bolshevist Government in its true proportions." This is a matter upon which your views will be of absorbing interest to me. Especially I beg you to "estimate in its true proportions" the recent attempt of Lenin to corrupt our Navy. Give us some guidance on this point.

I have also seen it announced that you intend to exercise your prophetic powers, and, more or less definitely, to adumbrate the future of Russia. Now, my dear Wells, as your constant and faithful mentor, I implore you not to prophesy about the future of Russia. Remember all the things you prophesied about during the war. After your handling of the past and present Russia, do you think it will be wise of you to tackle the future?

Besides, Archibald Spofforth is on the watch for you, the moment you begin to prophesy about any-

thing. You will remember that I had to defend you against him when, in his "Noted English Seers," he classed you as being, on the whole, rather less trustworthy in dealing with world problems than Old Moore. I hope I am not betraying any confidence when I tell you that Spofforth is anxiously looking out for your prognostications about Russia. Spofforth has a brutal disrespect for your theories. Don't give him a chance. Rebuke him by holding a dignified silence about the future of Russia.

If I am not usurping your prerogative, I will myself make a prophecy about the future of Russia. Russia will return to tolerable conditions of life, to order, health, security and prosperity, in the measure that she returns to and obeys those first abiding principles of social conduct and civilised government which are always and everywhere in operation; which fortify and preserve a State if they are obeyed; which disintegrate and destroy a State if they are disobeyed.

What those first abiding principles of civilised government are, together with the incidence and rigour of their operation, I propose to explain to you as I find leisure and opportunity. Meantime, I await your further deliverances upon Russian affairs, and will deal with them as they reach me at home or abroad.

Faithfully yours, HENRY ARTHUR JONES.

3rd November, 1920.

I sailed for New York on November 6th and the remainder of the series of letters were written in that city. H. A. J.

LETTER FIVE.

MR. WELLS INVENTS A NEW KIND OF HONESTY.

My Dear Wells,—

I trust you will acquit me of any intentional discourtesy in delaying to reply to your second article on "Russia in the Shadows" (*Drift and Salvage* —"Sunday Times," November 14, 1920.) It did not reach me until I arrived in New York a few days ago. I take my earliest leisure to offer you such comments and criticism as it seems to demand, and I ask your permission to lay them first before American readers and thinkers.

The writer in the English journal who recently claimed that you are "thinking for half Europe" did not specify which half of Europe is under your intellectual superintendence. I suppose he intended to convey that you are thinking for that very large number of Europeans—apparently he estimates them at half the population—who are unable to think for themselves. I am of opinion, that if statistics were available, we should find that the number of non-thinkers in Europe would enormously exceed his estimate of one-half the population. At

any rate, in my desire to be generous to you, I should have given you a much larger number of possible disciples, and a far wider range of wandering in the present chaos of political thought.

Through an oversight, the inspired writer omitted to mention how many Americans you are thinking for. Judging from the results, are you not already a little overweighted with your task of thinking for half Europe? Ought you to load yourself with the further responsibility of thinking for any considerable number of Americans? I speak with a care for your reputation.

However, you seem to have accepted this additional burden of vicarious intellectual activity on behalf of the American, as well as the European, Continent. I have no means of estimating what is the proportion of American citizens who are unable to think for themselves on social and political matters, and who are therefore looking to you for guidance and enlightenment. Let me say that, in the grave questions at issue between us, I will cheerfully allow you to think *for* all who are unable to think for themselves, and will myself be content to think *with* those who are able to think for themselves. I hope you will be satisfied with the sphere of influence I have allotted to you, and that you will acknowledge I have made a fair, and even a magnanimous, division of our respective provinces of thought. I assure you that I will not

try to seduce your disciples from you; nor do I suppose that you will seek to gain adherents within my circle.

Having thus carefully defined our respective relations to readers and thinkers on both continents, I address myself to the examination of your second paper on Russian conditions.

Your first paper contained a terrible account of the misery, hunger and despair of the masses of the common people. Your second paper gives an equally distressing picture of the pitiable condition of the literary, artistic, and scientific classes. In some respects it is more disheartening to read than your first article. As we are more grieved and pained to visit a lunatic asylum than a general hospital, so we are more grieved and pained to watch the dissolution of the intellectual and artistic life of a nation, than to watch the collapse of its commercial and economic activities.

You dwell, with many heartbreaking details, upon the miseries and privations of the Russian scientists, artists, composers and men of letters; you speak of their futile struggles; the waste of their great gifts; the high mortality among them; the abject poverty and desperate straits of those that remain. The one bright spot in the wide stretch of intellectual and artistic desolation is the Russian Theatre. You tell us that the great actor Shalyapin maintains what is perhaps the last "fairly comfortable" home in

Russia. One "fairly comfortable" home, and that the last, in the wide Russian continent, with its hundred million of inhabitants! I get some exceedingly small satisfaction from knowing that this last "fairly comfortable" home in Russia is tenanted by an actor. For nearly forty years I have been vainly trying to persuade Englishmen to take an intelligent interest and pride in their national drama and their national theatre. By the grimmest irony, the Russian people are starving, but their theatre, it seems, is vigorous, healthy and operative; while it would not be a wild exaggeration to say that the situation is reversed in England.

But apart from the theatre, you testify that the higher and nobler centres of Russian life are smitten with creeping palsy. The scientists, artists and writers lie helpless and numbed in cold obstruction; groping with pitiful, futile efforts to reach back to life; cut off from the arteries of civilisation; undernourished, save by despair; stricken, bedridden, impotent, moribund; a perishing brain in the fast perishing body of Russian civilisation.

That is the account you give us of the intellectual classes in Russia. While you relate the facts that came under your observation, we are in sorrowful accord with you. You are but one of a hundred voices, all bringing us the same despairing message.

It is when you interpret these terrible facts that you find yourself challenged alike by reason and by

humanity. In this second paper, as in your first, you seek excuses for the men who have brought Russia to this dreadful condition; and you indicate your sympathy with them in their determination to spread Internationalism over the civilised world. You insinuate that most of the evils that afflict the Russian people are due to the misguided policy of our own and the allied Governments, who did not take your advice at the start, and embrace the Bolshevist leaders and Bolshevist principles as the only means of salvation for humanity.

My dear Wells, if you would but show a quarter of the good-will for your own country, and for your own Government, in their present difficulties and trials, that you show for the Bolshevist Government, you would be a desirable British citizen.

But it has got into your head that International government by the proletariat is the only cure for the world's sorrows and evils and disorders. By the operation of that fatal law which, when a theory or an opinion has once obtained lodgment in a man's brain, condemns him to harbour and cherish it all the more fondly the more it is proved to be false; condemns him stubbornly to refuse to examine his theory in the light of facts; condemns him to force facts into the frame of his theory, and to shut his eyes to all facts that will not submit themselves to his distortion—by the operation of this fatal law you are condemned, my dear Wells, to go on finding

excuses for the Bolshevist Government; to explain away its murderous tyrannies and cruelties, and to suggest that it remains the only means of dragging Russia out of its pit of misery, poverty and despair.

There is a wealth of fine confused thinking in this second article of yours. It would be a lengthy, but not difficult, task to take from it certain of your own phrases, dicta, and admissions, and construct out of them a terrible indictment of the whole system of Bolshevist Government, including those functions of it which you esteem as constructive and hold up for our admiration.

I will select one sentence of yours from this paper, and for the present leave unexamined a score of others that furnish a convincing refutation of your whole social and political theory. With penetrating sagacity, you thus deliver yourself—"When a social order based on private property crashes, when private property is with some abruptness and no qualifications abolished, this does not abolish and destroy things which have hitherto constituted private property." It is plain from what has happened in Russia that, when private property is abolished, a vast amount of it does get destroyed, and does not get replaced; and that this leads to the woeful discomfort and poverty of the whole people. And, further, as you go on to show, much of the private property that has not been destroyed, and which belonged to individuals, and was useful and

pleasing to them, and helped them to adorn their lives—much of this private property is now useless to everybody, and is rotting in lumber rooms, and will probably be destroyed or plundered as time goes by.

Take, for instance, the stores of beautiful old lace that were robbed from Russian gentlewomen and that, you tell us, are now packed away in the former British Embassy. Lace has always been one of the endearing ornaments of delicate and refined womanhood; one of those graceful perquisites of her sex whereby the mate of man has made herself something different from the mate of the gorilla. What do you propose should be done with these stores of beautiful old lace that the Bolsheviki have confiscated? Would you let them stay in their cases till they drop into dust? Would you ration them out, so far as they will go, to drape the shivering shoulders of a few wretched half-clad Russian women and to mock their rags and hunger? What do you say should be done with all this beautiful lace and furniture and other treasures that were fashioned to be of use and adornment to private persons as their private property, and can have no purpose unless they are thus owned and used by individuals? Would you destroy them? They are the marks and precious effects of a high civilisation. If you would destroy them you might, with equal reason and from

the same motive, destroy all the other chief results of civilisation, which, indeed, seems to be the final goal of Bolshevism. You do not say how you would dispose of all these confiscated treasures. You foreshadow, apparently with considerable satisfaction, a like approaching general confiscation of English personal treasures and adornments—which may very well happen if our English working classes make an attempt to put your theories into practice and abolish private property.

Let us revert for a moment to the beginning of this sentence which I have chosen out of many others for a close examination.

"When a social order based on private property——," you say, and I arrest you on these words. You write as if the abolition of private property had been an occasional normal and natural event in history. You have lately been making some extensive studies in world history. Have you ever known any social order that has not been based on private property? Or that has not acknowledged large rights of ownership in private property? Do you not conduct your own affairs with confidence that the British Government (which you lose no chance of abusing) will assure you the peaceful possession of your own motor car and the due payment of your dividends, so that you are thus enabled to "think for half Europe," and being a possessor

of private property yourself you can safely rail against private property, and being a capitalist yourself you can safely rail against capitalism?

Will you give us some intelligible explanation of how any social order can be established or long continued, without a wide recognition of the rights of private property? This is a large general question, and cannot here be debated. When I have leisure, I will invite you to its further and full consideration.

You claim in your first article that the Bolshevist Government is the only Government that is possible in Russia at the present time. In the sense that nothing is possible except that which actually happens, you state what is obviously true. In the same sense it is true that the ideas which have actually got into your head are the only ideas which could possibly enter there. It is equally true that the only possible course of action that I can take with regard to your ideas, is to do my best to chase them out of your head.

In the same sense, it is true that the only possible Government in England in 1630 was the Government of Charles I. But Cromwell came, and soon made possible another form of government. Again, the only possible Government in France in 1780 was the Government of Louis XV. But Napoleon came, and soon made possible another form of government. In 1918, Kerensky held for a time the reins

of government in Russia. If Kerensky had been a man of insight and action, instead of being a wordster, if he had joined forces with Korniloff instead of betraying him, quite another form of government would have been possible and operative in Russia to-day. The horrors and bloodshed that attended the revolution would have been largely avoided, together with the misery and starvation that have followed. Russia would not now be in her present dreadful plight; the whole European situation would probably have been stabilised, and Eastern Europe would to-day be settling down to peaceful industry and security.

The reply to your assertion that the Bolshevist Government is the only possible Government in Russia to-day, is that this Government is founded on theories which, being enforced, have cruelly destroyed half the population of the large cities, and now oblige the miserable remnant of them to live on the verge of starvation. If such are the evident results of Bolshevist Government, as your papers testify, clearly the only possible form of Government in Russia is an impossible one! It must either renounce its theories, or dissolve with the dissolving remains of Russian civilisation.

You seem to have some apprehension of this consummation, so far as your illogical apologies for Bolshevism will allow you a clear perception of the whole situation. For you state that this Bolshevist

Government is based on Marxian principles, and these Marxian principles you ruthlessly excommunicate as crude and unworkable political heresies. In my next paper, I will try to unravel the tangled relations of Marxian principles with your own political creed; so far as you give us any indications of what particular brand of socialism you hold, and what are its essential tenets.

By your condemnation of Marxian principles you bring a deadly, unanswerable charge against the present Bolshevist Government. On the other hand, since its first assumption of power, you have praised the Bolshevist leaders as "farseeing statesmen," "shining clear," "profoundly wise," "intimately acquainted with social and economic questions, and indeed with almost everything that matters in real politics."

These and many other laudatory epithets you have showered upon the men who have brought the Russian people to their present dreadful condition, and who, as you carefully explain to us, are now governing Russia on entirely false and vicious Marxian principles. If the body of your disciples in Europe and America, the millions whom you are "thinking for," were able to collate and examine your confused utterances, wouldn't you be in a very awkward position as a leader of European thought?

However, having throughout warmly supported the Bolshevist leaders in the English papers, you are

now bound to say something in their favour. So, having witnessed for yourself the disastrous results of their administration, you cast about to think what you can advance to their credit, and thus justify your wholly inconsistent and illogical sympathy with them. And the only credential to character that you can give them is that they are "honest."

You have accused our English statesmen of being "crudely ignorant of the world of modern ideas." In that strange "world of modern ideas" where you formulate your theories, honesty seems to have quite changed its type and quality. What kind of honesty is this that you claim for Bolshevism? Has it any connection with the Eighth Commandment? Apparently not.

If you mean national honesty, the Bolshevist Government has repudiated its national debt. Our sorely tried French allies, to whom Russia is largely indebted, do not like this new kind of honesty. And because they protest against it and will not accept it, you, my dear Wells, who are always eager to discredit France as well as England—you charge the French with being vindictive creditors, and you monstrously claim that their natural desire to get paid is one of the chief causes of the present deplorable condition of Russia.

Does the repudiation of national debt count as an honest proceeding in your strange "world of modern ideas?" Have you ever considered what

would be the effect of a general repudiation of national debts on the entire civilisation of the world? Are you able even to imagine the incalculable misery and ruin it would work for a generation to come?

Coming to the matter of honesty toward individuals, it appears that you indorse the seizure of valuable old lace and personal treasures and effects as an honest proceeding. You look upon it as a natural and desirable part of your scheme for doing away with private property. Under the old pernicious system that has hitherto prevailed, these things were possessed and enjoyed by their owners, not always perhaps the most deserving people. Still, they were owned and used and enjoyed, so that numbers of people had the advantage of them. Under the new "honest" Bolshevist Government, nobody has the advantage of them. They are mostly destroyed and the remainder is left to perish unused.

But let us for a moment grant your curious claim that Bolshevism is honest. My dear Wells, the profound studies that you have recently been making in world history, cannot have left you in ignorance of the damnable fact that some of the greatest mischiefs and misfortunes that have overtaken mankind, have been caused by quite honest people working from mistaken theories.

I should not dream of questioning the honesty of your own thinking in these matters. Alas, whatever

credit I give to your honesty I must subtract from your sapience.

Taken as a whole, your second article on "Russia in the Shadow," with its inevitable deductions is a further and most powerful condemnation of the political theories that you profess, and that you are spreading among your legions of readers. Do you not see that, my dear Wells? Read it over carefully again.

Archibald Spofforth has compared you with Old Moore, as a prophet and interpreter of world movements. For myself, I see you as an inverted prophet Balaam. Balaam, you remember, was called upon by Balak to curse the children of Israel. By a Providential intervention, Balaam found himself compelled to bless them altogether. You, on the other hand, were called upon to bless the Bolshevist Government. Not so much by a lucky intervention of Providence, as by the overwhelming pressure of facts, you, my dear Wells, have been compelled to curse the Bolsheviki altogether. There is this much to be said for Balaam. After much prevarication and some self-contradiction, he finally came down on the right side of the fence. I am not without hope that you will do the same. I will render you some further assistance to this end.

HENRY ARTHUR JONES.

26th November, 1920.

LETTER SIX.

MR. WELLS GETS FURTHER ENTANGLED.

My Dear Wells,—

There is so great an amount of loose and confused thinking in the world—in addition to your own—that it seems advisable to make an organised effort to deal with it. I am sure you will claim that this effort, like every other human activity, should be an International one. After much prolonged and earnest consideration, I am convinced that this important matter should be placed under the jurisdiction of the League of Nations. This, I allow, is a startling proposal. I further allow that it is an utterly impracticable one. But surely that is no reason why it should not form part of the League's general scheme of operations, and afford its members another attractive subject for debate.

Without searching for the permanent and underlying cause of War, it must be granted that the late disastrous world conflict was immediately caused by the failure of a certain number of Euro-

pean politicians to think clearly, honestly and righteously upon the questions that you and I are now discussing—with less alacrity of cheerful response on your part than I could wish you to show.

Those who have accurate and retentive memories will be able to recall that the League of Nations was invented for the purpose of doing away with war. Its motto, I am told, is to be emblazoned on a shield of gold (an involuntary gift from the opulent taxpayers of Europe) and is to be inscribed over the portico of its hotel in Geneva. That motto runs as follows: "Let every nation meddle in the affairs of every other nation." Putting aside the question whether this is the best method of securing that international good-will and amity which we all desire, it is manifest that careless and disordered thinking is an accessory cause of war. Now, if the League of Nations is benevolently engaged in stopping war, it may be quite as benevolently engaged in stopping the careless and disordered thinking that leads to war—or at least in debating about the matter. The League has got this large hotel in Geneva, and its members must debate about something. As a taxpayer, I contribute to the enormous expenses of the League. I hope, therefore, that I am entitled to suggest a subject for its discussion.

Further, my dear Wells, in proposing to place all the careless and disordered thinking in the world under the jurisdiction of the League of Nations, I

am paying a very pretty compliment to yourself. For this same League of Nations was one of the many things that you so lavishly prophesied about during the war. It is true that before it was constituted, the League tended to cloud that good understanding between America and Britain upon which the peace of the whole world depends. It is also true that one of its first effects, after it was constituted, was to cloud that good understanding between Britain and France which is almost, if not quite, as necessary for the preservation of the world's peace. But if I know anything of the constitution of your mind, if I rightly estimate your loyal, unflinching adherence to your theories, even when they are working disastrously for mankind, your faith in the League of Nations remains unshaken.

For these reasons, then, I propose that the League of Nations shall be appointed to control—or at least to discuss—the vast amount of loose, disordered thinking that goes on in the world.

I suppose that the League will proceed in this matter by its favourite system of mandates. I have, therefore, applied to the Council of the League of Nations for a mandate to superintend your social and political philosophy. I hope you will take this as evidence of my continued interest in your attempts to impose your international theories upon the

kindly simplicity of those whom you are "thinking for."

It would be a grateful acknowledgment of the services I am rendering you, and it would also be a flattering courtesy to the League itself, if you would also apply to the Council for a mandate to look after my thinking on these questions. For, if I am holding wrong opinions about momentous matters upon which the peace and security of the whole world depend, you could not do me, or the public, a greater service than to expose my fallacies with the same vigilance and pertinacity that I am trying to expose yours. Unlike yourself, the moment I find I am holding a wrong opinion I turn the veriest coward and renegade. I do not stand by it and seek to justify it. I abjure it and take to my heels.

It may be that the Council of the League of Nations will refuse to issue a mandate to me to look after your thinking. I do not think this is likely. Mandates have not been going off very well lately, and I take it that the League will be only too glad to issue at least one mandate that will be scrupulously, industriously and rigorously obeyed. If, however, the Council refuse to grant me a mandate to watch over your lucubrations, I shall follow the course that is usually adopted with regard to the League's decisions. I shall take no notice of them. I shall issue a mandate to myself.

In pursuance of this resolve I proceed to my promised examination of your third paper on "Russia in the Shadow" ("The New York Sunday Times," November 21st, 1920).

In reading it through, I was so much struck by two separate passages in it that I think them worthy to be detached from the body of the paper and set forth in juxtaposition. In the beginning of the article you say, *"To-day the Bolshevist Government sits, I believe, in Moscow, as securely established as any Government* in Europe." That sentence tacitly affirms the enduring stability of Bolshevist rule. Later in the article you say, "If we help Baron Wrangel to pull down the *by no means firmly established Government in Moscow*——" That sentence tacitly affirms the precarious instability of Bolshevist rule.

Of course, you may juggle with both sentences until you prove that you didn't mean to convey either one impression or the other. In the first sentence, it suited your general purpose to frighten us away from questioning the authority and permanence of Bolshevist rule. In the second sentence, it suited your general purpose to frighten us into supporting Bolshevist rule, because it is an attempt to enforce Internationalist theories. You may plead that your inconsistencies are not likely to be noticed by your disciples, who for the most part allow you to do their thinking for them. It is quite

likely that you do not notice these inconsistencies yourself. But if you will not think me annoyingly inquisitive, may I press you to tell us which of these two contradictory opinions about Bolshevist rule you do really hold?

I may remind you that you took, what has been called with exaggerated accuracy, a week-end trip to Russia, in order that you might learn all about the conditions of the country, and the aims and prospects of its present rulers. Very plainly the destiny of millions in Europe depends upon whether or not Bolshevist government is securely established in Moscow. You are at liberty not to have an opinion upon this question of sovereign importance to all the world. You can frankly say, "I don't know." But, kindly disposed as I am to allow you the widest and wildest latitude of unsupported and unverified assertion, indulgent as I am to all human frailties, I really cannot permit you to hold two contradictory opinions upon the same matter of fact. That is asking too much of my good nature. Please tell us which opinion you do really hold. The least respect you can show to those whose thinking you are doing for them, is to be coherently wrong.

Having given this striking and characteristic example of the measure of your ability to think for other people, and of the value of your pronouncements, I might well be absolved from any further analysis either of the statements you make about

Russian conditions, or of the conclusions you draw from them. In this third paper there is again a wealth of confused and contradictory utterance and inference. A less gentle-mannered man than myself would be tempted to a severe exposure and reproof of it. But I wish to let you off easily, in the hope that my moderation will incline you to a judicious suppression of your more glaring delinquencies and illogicalities.

I must, however, glance at one or two of the many loose and provocative passages which I had marked for dissection and refutation. In sketching the condition of Russia in the closing months of 1917 you remark: "Through this fevered and confused country went representatives of Britain and France, blind to the quality of immense and tragic disaster about them, *intent only upon the war.*"

I think it impossible that any representative of Britain or France at that terrible time could be blind to "the quality of immense and tragic disaster about them," not only in Russia, but throughout Europe. If they were blind how can you possibly know it? Have you questioned them about their impressions of the Russian situation at that time? What is your authority for that statement? What prompts you to make it, except your ineradicable antipathy to your own country and to France? It is probable in the highest degree that in the midst of the threatening

and increasing anxieties of the whole European situation in those months, the representatives of Britain and France in Russia, instead of being blind, saw very clearly that the only way of avoiding a far more immense and tragic disaster for Russia was to be "intent on the war." In that case their eyes and their intelligence were far more wide awake than yours.

For again, I must remind you, and I do here stamp and engrave it upon your memory, and upon the memory of every one who reads these letters, so that they may have a perpetual test of the value of your judgment in all these supreme matters—I do here insistently remind you, my dear Wells, that in those closing months of 1917 you were calling upon England, in the columns of our leading journals, to sacrifice and abandon everything that she had taken up arms to guard, and to make an infamous, ignoble, defeatist peace with Germany. I brought you to account then, as I am bringing you to account now, and as I shall continue to bring you to account, while you continue to backbite your country, and to fondle those who are seeking to drag it into revolution and anarchy.

In those late months of 1917 you were perniciously intent upon stopping the war. Naturally, you have a bad word for the British and French representatives who were intent upon urging Russia

to carry it on. Had Russia been able to follow their counsels, she would probably have been spared the worst of her present miseries.

Let us touch upon another point. You speak with admiration of the genius of the ex-Pacifist Trotzky. Ex-Pacifist! Yes, my dear Wells, if you will but follow the laws of action and reaction, you will find that Pacifism and the proclamation of International Brotherhood inevitably call forth a response of militarism. You indicate some sympathetic admiration for the spirit and the equipment of the army which the ex-Pacifist Trotzky has raised. They are to be employed, among other things, in undermining the security of the British Empire. Of course you give them a passing nod of recognition.

Zorin, another of the Bolshevist Communist leaders, engages your affection and admiration. He met, you tell us, with brutal incivility when applying for a job as a packer in a big dry goods store in New York. He therefore set himself to wreck what remained of social order in Russia. It seems to be an ill-founded and insufficient motive, something akin to the motive of the boy who stoned a flock of goslings because some days before a gander had pecked his leg. Doubtless you will argue that in the urgent necessity to destroy our present civilisation, the sins of the ganders in New York must be visited upon the goslings in Russia.

But Zorin established a still stronger title to your friendship and esteem. You did your best, you say, to find out from Zenovieff and Zorin what they thought they were doing at the Baku conference. You suppose they "had a vague idea of hitting back at the British Government." Naturally, you declare you have a real friendship for Comrade Zorin. Any man who hits at your own Government and your own country is a man whom you take to your heart. Throughout this third paper you condemn and expose the vicious Marxian principles upon which these men are governing Russia. But you will heartily and freely forgive them for all the consequent misery and starvation and ruin they have brought upon their country, in consideration of their lofty determination to spread these same doctrines throughout the British Empire, and bring your own country to the same misery, starvation and ruin. That, I submit to you, my dear Wells, is a fair summary of your general political argument. It unifies the inconsistencies which all these papers of yours contain into the consistency of a sustained effort on your part to vilify your own country and to aid and extol the Russian revolutionists, who avowedly are seeking to break into pieces the British Empire.

Unless you express a wish that I shall examine your third paper in greater detail, I shall conclude that you are satisfied with the remarks that I have

already made upon it. I must not forget my promise to let you off easily, so far as my stern sense of the duty I owe you will allow me.

In my last letter I made another promise. I rashly said I would try to unravel the tangled relations of Marxian principles with your own political creed. This, I frankly confess, I am unable to do; for I cannot get any clear and consequent knowledge of what your political creed is. I shall have to throw myself upon your indulgence, and ask you to be kind enough to explain exactly what are its guiding principles, and how you propose to apply them in a practical, intelligible way to the present troubles and disorders of the world.

You unreservedly condemn and ridicule the cardinal Marxian doctrines. You tell us that although Marxian Communism is stupidly, blindly wrong and mischievous, yet you have an admiration and friendship for the men who have imposed it upon the Russian people to the infinite misery and impoverishment of the land. Further, you obviously regard the British Empire as a monstrous imposture, and you see in its prolonged existence the one great obstacle to the realisation of your International theories and designs.

But these are negative doctrines. I suppose you would call yourself a Socialist and a revolutionary. But, my dear Wells, there are so many different

sorts of Socialists, and so many different sorts of revolutionaries. Apparently, their only point of agreement is that the present social order must be destroyed, and a new civilisation built upon principles utterly different from those which have hitherto regulated the conduct and actions of mankind.

When I was a boy, there were various religious sects in the provincial town of some twenty thousand inhabitants where I lived. Their spiritual guides and elders disputed interminably about the doctrines of justification, sanctification, predestination, and other essential, but entirely obscure and transcendental articles of faith. I remember that the Particular Baptists, an extremely small and exclusive sect, prided themselves upon being God's own elect. This enabled them to indulge in constant theological discussion and occasional moral lapses.

It seems that the varieties and vagaries of theological doctrine, which afforded so much opportunity for earnest debate to our grandfathers, are in this generation replaced by the varieties and vagaries of Socialist doctrine. I was awed and impressed by the mysteries of justification and predestination. I could not understand them, and gave up all attempts to bring them into relation with the realities of the world in which I was living. I am not awed and not impressed by the varied and contradictory doctrines of Socialism. But, equally, I cannot bring

them into relation with the realities of the world in which I am living. They offer to me no better guidance in the conduct and regulation of the world's practical affairs than my old puzzles "Justification" and "Predestination."

In consideration of the trouble I am taking to put you right, my dear Wells, I hope you will take the pains to relieve my bewilderment when I try to understand your own political principles and to put them into practical relation with the facts and realities of our disordered world. Give us some intelligible statement of the socialistic creed that will transform human nature, and will therefore be workable in this actual world in which we live.

I am quite sure that in your voluminous writings you have already formulated one, or perhaps fifty, of such paper schemes for the regeneration of mankind by Socialistic International Government. Alas! my dear Wells, you formulated a paper scheme for the international government of Mid-Africa. Whatever its merits, it had the rather serious drawback that any attempt to work it would have thrown the whole continent into confusion. However, I will not dwell any further upon your indiscretions. You are relying upon my promise to let you off easy.

There are wicked men in the world, my dear Wells, who won't let your theories work. That is the sole bar to your success as a social philosopher.

Why not frustrate their malice and get a new set of theories?

Adieu, till our next meeting.

HENRY ARTHUR JONES.

2nd December, 1920.

LETTER SEVEN.

MR. WELLS, THE SAILORMAN, AND THE STOLEN TEAPOT.

My Dear Wells,—

In a former letter I found it convenient to define our respective relations to readers and thinkers in America and England. With a generosity that I hope you appreciate, I concede that you should be allowed to think *for* all who are unable to think for themselves. I do not doubt that, even after these papers of yours on "Russia in the Shadow," you will still be able to command and preserve the respect and admiration of this very numerous body. For myself I begged, what I am sure you will consider a less enviable privilege, that of thinking *with* those who are able to think for themselves.

Addressing myself exclusively to members of this clique, I will say that these Russian papers of yours, when carefully read, giving due weight to all your statements, admissions, suppressions, apologies, extenuations, insinuations, confusions and contradictions—drawing from your own words their inevitable deductions and consequences—I will say that these papers of yours contain the most formidable

and damning indictment of Bolshevist Government that their strongest opponent could frame, or their most hapless victim could desire.

Your fourth article ("New York Sunday Times," November 28, 1920) is called "Creative Effort in Russia." Your first three papers pictured very vividly the widely spread misery, destitution, starvation and aimless despair that prevail throughout the land. Being obsessed with your theory that International Socialistic Government must at all costs be enforced upon the world, and the Bolshevist Government being the only one that has yet attempted to carry your theory into practice, you are bound to find some show of evidence that the Bolshevist Government is not responsible for the continued and progressive misery and decay of Russia. So you fasten the blame upon any fictitious or quite secondary causes that will serve your purpose; and, chiefly, you insinuate that the British and French Governments are the malignant blunderers who are mainly accountable for the worst miseries and disasters that have fallen upon Russia.

You are also bound to find some show of evidence that this universal collapse and ruin is compensated by such a display of "creative effort" as to prove that Bolshevist Government is a hopeful and desirable experiment for mankind. Here you make out a very bad case indeed. You called your second paper "Drift and Salvage." In it you showed that

while there was a tremendous amount of "Drift," there was an infinitesimal amount of "Salvage." In this fourth paper, you equally show that the very small quantity and the very poor quality of the "Creative Effort" in Russia is in itself a severe condemnation of the enormous Destructive Effort that preceded and has accompanied it.

Let us examine your account of this "Creative Effort." The first thing that strikes us is the meagreness and poverty of your items. Is that all the credit of constructive foresight and promised stability and security that you can place against the incalculable deficit of actual famine, misery, disease and helpless apathy and despair? You tell us that this helpless apathy and despair, this feeling of irreparable collapse and ruin, possesses the Russian people, and yet you try to awaken our admiration for the Bolshevist rulers, because, in spite of their governing Russia on what you explain are false and vicious Marxian principles, they are "the only body of people in this vast spectacle of Russian ruin with a common faith" —in these false principles—"and a common spirit" —of blind, reckless fanaticism. My dear Wells! O, my dear Wells! O, my ultra-preposterous Wells! O, my exceedingly befuddled and bemuddled Wells! O, my obstinately auto-obfuscated Wells!

Again, I have marked a long succession of passages in your fourth article that invite, nay clamour for exposure, or challenge, or indignant reproof,

or a smart tap with the jester's bauble. But I must remember that the good, patient public has other interests in life besides the ventilation of your theories. Also, I must not forget my promise to let you off easily—so far as you do not trespass too much on my kindly forbearance.

You give us several illustrations of the kind of "Creative Effort" that is being organised in Russia. You tell us that there are Bolsheviki so stupid that they would stop the teaching of chemistry in schools until they were assured that it was "proletarian" chemistry. You say that Hebrew studies have been suppressed because they are "reactionary." Ah! Here is a clue—

Great prophets and poets and teachers of Israel, you who for centuries have shown mankind the way of life, and kept in bounds the turbulent seas of human savagery and passion and lust; you who have set up the everlasting signals and landmarks that guide the wayward steps of our race, and have inflamed the peoples with the thirst for righteousness, and have fed the spiritual sources of the world's civilisation, and have written your golden precepts upon the hearts of all them that have loved and sacrificed themselves for their brother men—Moses, David, Solomon, Isaiah, Job, Jesus the son of Sirach, Jesus of Nazareth, and all you kindred great consultant oracles and counselors of the nations —fitly, most fitly, and with surest instinct, O obsolete

dead reactionary ones, have the Bolshevist rulers decreed that you shall have no voice or sway in their pauper pandemonium commonwealth!

We get an impression that whatever "Creative Effort" there may be in Russia, it must be singularly inept or misdirected, when you relate, with a bitter sense of ill-usage, that about eighty hours of your life were "consumed in travelling, telephoning and waiting about in order to talk for about an hour and a half with Lenin." Eighty hours! Why, my dear Wells, that must have been approximately half the time you had at your disposal for the purpose of thoroughly investigating and studying the condition of the Russian people and the effects of Bolshevist Government. Eighty hours spent to obtain an hour and a half's talk with Lenin! Take my word for it, my dear Wells, it was time very badly spent. Now if you will but come and have an hour and a half's talk with me, I promise you that either the one or the other of us shall derive some benefit from it.

The impression of the total absence of any "Creative Effort in Russia" that works toward the comfort and convenience of the daily lives of the people, is still further deepened by the account you give us of your journey and visit to Moscow. In a graphic narrative you describe how you were placed in charge of a sailorman, who was topographically ignorant of where he was taking you, and

who carried about a stolen silver teapot in lieu of a mariner's compass to steer your wanderings. Now I see in that story a profound piece of instructive allegory, mercifully vouchsafed to you by Providence to warn you off your International theories. The sailorman aptly symbolises an incompetent, ignorant and dishonest crew of politicians who have forsaken their useful occupations to take charge of bewildered humanity (yourself) and to guide it through a strange city (the present world disorder) about whose topography they know nothing, and this with no better instrument for directing themselves and the mass of bewildered humanity they have taken under their charge, than the false mariner's compass of a stolen silver teapot. (The stolen teapot clearly signifies that taking other people's property is the only guide to their confused movements.)

Why, my dear Wells, the allegory is perfect. Lay it to heart, I beseech you, as the threatening symbol and foreshadow of what will befall us under International Government.

After much devious and futile wandering, you were moved to swear roundly at the sailorman. Yes, that is what we shall all be doing, when we find ourselves under the direction of the International sailorman who has stolen our best silver teapot. Oh, the language we shall use at him!

You give much space in this fourth article to the "Creative Effort" that you saw in operation in

Russian schools. You visited two of them. You formed a very bad opinion of the first. You could witness no teaching, and the behaviour of the youngsters indicated a low standard of discipline. Your guide questioned the children upon the subject of English literature and the writers they liked most. One name dominated all others—your own. You tell us that amongst these badly-behaved, ill-conducted little scholars you towered like a literary colossus, and that Milton, Dickens, and Shakespeare ran about intermittently between your feet. No fact that you have related, my dear Wells, shows more clearly the appalling perversion and confusion of ideas that reign in Russia. However, you modestly deprecated the flattering estimate that these feeble, immature intellects had formed of your position in English literature. You even resented that the other authors—amongst them, Shakespeare—were not given a chance to train the children's minds. But, my dear Wells, do you know that this Shakespeare is a rank, incorrigible, irreclaimable patriot, as pestilent a patriot as Pitt or Washington or Lincoln—believe me, a villainous and most robustious and unabashed subverter of all your cherished theories? But perhaps you haven't read him. Do give him a spare hour when you can find the time. Archibald Spofforth has just suggested to me that you would do well to take Shakespeare away to a

quiet desert island, and study him carefully for a year.

But this Shakespeare, whom you seem to have heard about as an excellent author for the young—why, my dear Wells, if you once allow this man's political philosophy to get a hearing, if you once let him impregnate the young with his pernicious principles of government and political and social order, Internationalism won't stand the tenth part of a sporting chance against him. I tell you this, so that you may take the necessary steps to prevent his influence from spreading. In your third article, *pour encourager les autres,* the millions of the unemployed who are dissatisfied, you confess to a longing as a young man to burn down your employer's shop.* Why not do a more necessary piece of incendiarism, and clear a free course for Internationalism to have its way and work its will in the world? Why not burn down Stratford-on-Avon Church, and rid the world of what remains of this arch enemy of human progress as set forth in the doctrines and methods of Jack Cade? I make this suggestion, because it falls in with your own impulse to burn down your employer's shop as a practical way of removing social grievances.

And it is this same Shakespeare who, whenever

*"*I would have set fire to that place (his employer's shop) if I had not been convinced it was overinsured.*"—H. G. Wells, "*Russia in the Shadows,*" p. 85.

he touches your social and political theories, shrivels them to tinder—it is this same Shakespeare whom you recommend as a teacher in Bolshevist schools, as an instructor of Bolshevist children!

My dear Wells, my unapproachable Wells, into what a sub-nethermost pit, into what a Serbonian bog of disconglutinated illogicality have you fallen, and do there flounder, and cannot clear its mud from your eyes!

You visited these two Russian schools. In the first, where there was no evidence of teaching, and where the children seemed to spend all their time in reading your books, there was a low standard of discipline. I make no comment. I draw no inference. Doubtless there are schools where your books and social philosophy do not form the complete curriculum, and where yet the behaviour of the children is not all that could be desired.

You visited a second school. You tested the vogue of H. G. Wells among its scholars. None of them had ever heard of him. The school library contained none of his books. This you tell us was a much better school than the one you had first visited. The discipline of the children was better, and you saw some excellent teaching in progress. Again I make no comment. I draw no inference. I merely relate the facts as you state them. I am the last man to say that a knowledge of your writings is the only cause of bad behaviour and lack of dis-

cipline in children. Yet a close study of your account of your visits to these two Russian schools, gives us some reason to fear that this may be the case. The matter needs further examination. Meantime I will give you the benefit of the doubt.

You afterwards discovered that in the first school your friend Chukovsky had been playing a trick upon you by arranging for you a spurious temporary popularity among its feeble, immature intellects. That was not what you desired. You rightly administer a gentle reproof to Chukovsky for not appreciating "the real gravity of the business you had in hand." Chukovsky evidently thought you were out for a lark. I hope Chukovsky now understands that you wish your social philosophy to be taken seriously.

You generalise, most rashly I should say, from the two schools you visited that the quality of teaching has risen since the Czarist régime, and you try to make out a good case for the educational "Creative Effort" in Russia. Alas, my dear Wells, you have to admit that great numbers of the children cannot be got to school at all, and are engaged in secret illicit trading upon the streets. The adults are forbidden to buy and sell, and consequently this vast amount of secret illicit trading has to be done, and is done by the Russian children. Further, you give us horrible accounts of widely spread sexual immorality among the young. Well, what could

you expect? The children are taken from the care of their parents and are being, as you term it, "institutionalised"—dreadful word and dreary process and dreary, abominable destiny for the children. Would you like your own children to be "institutionalised"?

Taken altogether, your fourth paper gives us the impression that there is very little "Creative Effort in Russia"; that most of what there is, is actively mischievous, and that none, or scarcely any of it, is directed toward securing the daily comfort and happiness of the people. The "Creative Effort in Russia" appears to be of the same kind as Jack Cade's.

We learn from another visitor to Russia of a single "Creative Effort" on the part of Mrs. Trotzky. The abolition of buying and selling has naturally led to this enormous amount of secret illicit trading, which, as you tell us, finds sweet and salutary employment for the Russian children. I think you may use this fact as a striking illustration of an initial benefit conferred upon society by the abolition of private property.

But, in addition to this vast development of private illicit trading, there is also a public illicit trading rendezvous, appropriately called the "Thieves' Market," where the general commercial transactions and activities of Moscow are carried on. Being unable to eradicate the criminal tendency

of human nature to buy and sell, and yet being laudably determined to uphold the principles of Bolshevism, the Government raids the Thieves' Market at intervals, and arrests both buyers and sellers.

Now whether from private necessity or from conviction that it is to the public advantage that people who have goods to sell should be allowed to sell them, and people who are in want of goods should be allowed to buy them—inspired by one of these two motives, Mrs. Trotzky went incognito to the Thieves' Market to purchase some necessity or luxury of life. She was arrested by the Government raiders, and being unable to prove her identity, or to telephone her plight to the immaculate Trotzky, she was locked up in prison for a night. That is how they punish genuine creative effort in Russia. For I maintain, my dear Wells, that Mrs. Trotzky was engaged in a genuine, if unconscious, effort to restore the social order that is involved in, and is inseparable from, commercial intercourse. You, of course, maintain the contrary.

So much, then, for your fourth paper on "Creative Effort in Russia."

* * * * *

When I come to your fifth article, "The Dreamer in the Kremlin," I am overwhelmed by the opportunities it offers to me for comment. Judging from your amiable but silent reception of such comment

and admonition as I have already proffered to you on the first four articles, and relying, as indeed you may, upon my repeated promise to treat you gently and mercifully, I am sure you would wish me to subject this fifth article to a strict and exhaustive analysis. You are looking for it, anxiously waiting for it, and I will not disappoint you. But, for the moment, I must beg you to show me some of the kindly forbearance that I have shown to you throughout these letters. I promise you that I will deal with this fifth article as soon as I can find the leisure and opportunity to do justice to it. For the present, you must exercise patience—tedious and exasperating as the delay may seem to you.

One comment, however, I am forced to make. This "Dreamer in the Kremlin," to whom you have alluded as the "beloved Lenin," * is responsible for innumerable savageries and cruelties upon this most miserable, starving and bewildered Russian people. Four thousand of his hapless countrymen were recently shot down in one month without a trial. What of that? What of all the other countless thousands of tortures and murders? He is an enemy of your country. He has lately sent to England stolen gold to bribe our workingmen to mad revolution, and to corrupt the British Navy, the ultimate defence of that civilisation which, im-

* *"Lenin, beloved leader of all that is energetic in Russia today,"* "Russia in the Shadows," p. 88.

perfect, lumbering, and open in many respects to wide improvement as we all admit, does yet shelter you in your persistent attacks upon it; provides you with a motor car and cosy dividends, and also, as I entreat you to remember, does also shelter and protect not only yourself, but hundreds of millions on this earth, from such misery, anarchy, despair and starvation as prevail in Russia. He is an enemy of your country. Naturally you call him the "beloved Lenin."

While your articles on "Russia in the Shadow" have been making their weekly appearances, I have had to listen to much ill-natured and contemptuous criticism upon them from Archibald Spofforth. All through I have taken your part against him, so far as you gave me the chance of saying a good word for you. I have constantly said to Spofforth, "Watch them carefully! Wells has got something up his sleeve. Wells will make some great unexpected coup before he has finished."

I argued with Spofforth something in this strain: "Wells may be a very poor and confused social philosopher, but he is a confirmed and determined Socialist." To this Spofforth only emitted one of his unmannerly grunts. I grew a little heated on your behalf. "Wells," I continued severely, "is always pointing out the foolish and criminal waste that goes on in our present social economy. Now," I said, fixing Spofforth with a triumphant glance and

nod, "Wells knows that paper is very scarce and dear. He knows that the newspaper proprietors have to guard every inch of space. Do you mean to tell me that Wells would allow tons (perhaps this was an exaggeration) of valuable paper to be used in advertising him as the greatest living English writer, unless he had got something good to say? Wells is too good a Socialist, too severe an economist, and too sensible a man, to allow all that valuable paper to be used in advertising him, without doing something to justify the expense. Wait and see," I said. "Wells is going to spring upon us some surprise; he is going to show us what the greatest living English writer can do when he gets a theme that he knows how to handle."

I was so confident in your powers, my dear Wells, that I eagerly accepted the bet Spofforth offered of a new shiny silk top hat—I forgot for the moment that shiny top hats will be too conspicuous in your new social order—Spofforth offered to bet one that you wouldn't make any literary coup that would justify your editors in wasting all that paper. My dear Wells, I've lost my bet! I hope you will allow that a slight feeling of grievance against you in this matter is not unnatural on my part.

Of course, I couldn't exactly tell what sort of a coup you were going to make. I had some expectancy that before you ended these papers you would announce that, having written so much about

how the world should be governed, you had persuaded Lenin to enjoy a short vacation, while you took his place for a fortnight, and showed us in a practical, feasible, workable way how the trick is to be done. You ought really to take the first fortnight you can spare, put yourself at the head of affairs in one of the distracted countries and show what a happy place you can make of it, when you govern it instead of "think" for it. Whatever lucky country you choose to govern, I think you should allow yourself a full fortnight to get things straight —the same time that you took for your very comprehensive review of Russian conditions.

To conclude. If, my dear Wells, I seem at times to be trifling with these deadly serious questions in these deadly serious times, I assure you that my apparent levity is only on the surface. I have the deepest sense of their magnitude and import. But how can I deal with the many inconsistencies and confusions that swarm through your articles and that may lead the unthinking multitude into vain revolt against eternal realities and eternal laws—how can I treat these heedless inconsistencies, except to laugh at you—and weep for them?

There is a soul of goodness in things evil. Humanity is like a running stream. However muddy and polluted it may be in parts of its course, it cleanses itself as it flows along. We may take heart from these following facts. The leaders of the

Russian Government, you say, are changing their opinions on many points. Another recent traveller brings us word that scarcely any of their original decrees and laws are now enforced, but are allowed to drop into disuse as they are found to be impracticable. Yet another observer tells us that the Russian Army is inflamed by Patriotism, and that this is really the force that holds the people together. And again, another visitor says that vainly have the people been torn away from Religion. They are crowding the churches. Religion and Patriotism are primary universal instincts in the hearts of men. They often take absurd and mischievous forms, but they continue to move the masses of mankind. Your theories seek to abolish these primary instincts. That's one of the reasons why your theories won't work, my dear Wells. With constant concern for you,

HENRY ARTHUR JONES.

10th December, 1920.

LETTER EIGHT.

MR. WELLS BECOMES EVEN MORE PREPOSTEROUS.

My Dear Wells,—

It grieves me to the heart to find that you are not taking a more vigorously loquacious part in this controversy. The questions at issue between you and me are of such sovereign importance to mankind that I am justified in expecting from you something more than this conspiracy of silence and self-obliteration.

I do not forget that at the beginning of our discussion, in "The London Evening Standard," you so far indulged my wish for a response, as to call me a "liar," "an excited imbecile," "a silly ranter," a "forger," with other kindred vivacities of dignified debate. That gave an exhilarating start to the affair. It led me to expect great things from you. "Here's a man of mettle!" I said. "Here's a foeman worthy of my steel!" But in the effort of administering this resounding chastisement to me, you seem to have exhausted your capacity for further argument. Like Homer, you ceased. You said it was impossible to argue with a man who did not

understand the use of inverted commas. Rather than you should be robbed of whatever benefit you might gain from a further examination of your theories and whimsies, I offered to carry on the controversy all alone, and to find arguments for us both. I hope I have not disappointed you.

I still feel equal to the task of continuing the discussion all alone—by my solitary pen—and if you so decide, you shall not find me lacking, either in matter or in determination to set it before the public. But am I not selfishly taking more than my fair share of this causerie, like some rude fellow at a dinner table who absorbs all the conversation while another guest is eagerly waiting a chance to get his say? Come, my dear Wells, I am sure you must be bursting to unpack yourself, if not of any illuminating comment, yet, at least, of a thousand robust and crashing fulminations, such as you hurled at the head of the Moscow sailorman. Yet you subdue yourself to a most nugatory quiescence. I appreciate this sober self-abnegation on your part, but I feel that I ought not to take advantage of it. Aren't you keeping it up too long? Don't you owe it to the large public who allow you to do their thinking for them—half of Europe, as your inspired eulogist claims, and at least several hundreds of Americans—don't you owe it to them to emerge from your retirement, vault into the arena, triumphantly expound

yourself, mercilessly confound me, and give me that public punishment which I so richly deserve?

Even if you were merely to repeat the epithets that I have quoted above, adding perhaps your suspicions that I attempted to poison your inspired eulogist, and crowning such irresistible arguments with the staggering accusation that I know nothing about the functions of inverted commas—even if you were merely to spread yourself discursively in these directions, it would at least show that you are alive to the necessity of saying something in reply to me. I urge you to take this line of reply because it would suit your method of controversy, and also because it is peculiarly adapted to the minds of that large class whom you are "thinking for." You mustn't lose your hold upon them.

Come, my dear Wells, I am quite willing to stand aside while you subject my arguments and conclusions to the same analytic treatment that I have given to yours. You are, as I think, misleading great numbers on both sides of the Atlantic in matters of such serious concern that the security, welfare and happiness of vast populations depend upon their right judgement of these matters. To the best of my ability I have tried to correct some of the fallacies, inconsistencies and confusions of thought that form the basis of your social and political doctrine, and that are mischievously incorporated in these papers

of yours on Russia. Being set before the unthinking multitude in your numerous editions, they may multiply into active disorder—so infectiously epidemic is wrong thinking.

Come, my dear Wells, what have you to say in reply to me? The public is impatiently waiting for me to keep silence, and to give you a chance to make yourself heard. I invite you to take your fair share of this discussion. You won't? You positively refuse? My dear Wells, I regretfully accept the situation.

And now you are longing for me to redeem my promise to say something about your fifth paper, "The Dreamer in the Kremlin." If you are building any extravagant hopes upon its receiving from me that exhaustive treatment which it so fully deserves, I fear you will be disappointed. For in the meantime it has received ("New York Sunday Times," December 12, 1920), from John Spargo an examination so ample, penetrating and convincing that you must be a very unreasonable man if you still clamour for any further lengthy discussion of it from me. I will thank Mr. Spargo for dealing with "The Dreamer in the Kremlin" so thoroughly, so sincerely, so admirably throughout, that I might well ask you to release me from my promise to deal with it myself.

Mr. Spargo's paper is all the more welcome as, like yourself, he is a good Socialist. I intend to be

a good Socialist myself, when all the rest of you good Socialists can agree among yourselves upon a plan that is suited to the facts and exigencies of the world wherein we live—and if you will also show me that plan in actual operation, even upon the smallest scale, among the smallest community.

I really think you ought to be content, my dear Wells, with John Spargo's clearly and closely reasoned analysis of "The Dreamer in the Kremlin." Still, if you insist, and, lest I should leave rankling in your mind some quite excusable suspicion that I am failing in my obligations to you—as, indeed, is my own constant fear—I will humour your importunity and make a few remarks upon this fifth paper of yours.

John Spargo has most temperately, but ruthlessly exposed the disingenuities, the palliations, the sinful inconsistencies and inconsequences of your blind infatuation for Bolshevism. One of your London admirers has spoken of your "giant mind." A giant mind indeed it must be that can find room in its capacious recesses for your Titanic and Titanianic delusions about Bolshevism. Now, my dear Wells, if I have established any claim upon your gratitude, will you in return do me the small favour to read over carefully John Spargo's criticism of your entire attitude toward Bolshevism and its leaders? Read it over again and again, my dear Wells. You could not employ your time more profitably.

Now, having studied it, I will ask you what are the dominant impressions that it leaves upon you? Of course you are struck with the easy, masterly way in which John Spargo blows into indiscoverable atoms your jerry-built argument that the terrible misery and ruin of Russia have been caused, not by the Bolsheviki, but by the Allied policy and the collapse of Czarism. You have resolved that you will never again be so foolish and so self-deceiving as to contend that Bolshevism is not mainly guilty of this crazy and tragic dismemberment of the Russian people.

Then you are struck with the easy way in which Spargo lays bare the inadequacy, inaccuracy, poverty and spurious pretentiousness of your knowledge of Russian conditions, gained chiefly in your week-end trip, as, with elastic precision, it has been called. Next, you are arrested by Spargo's sweeping exposure of the mischievous impracticability, the economic blindness and fallacy of your solution of the Russian question. I will not discredit the prowess of that giant mind of yours; I will not do you so great an injustice, my dear Wells, as to suppose it possible that, having read carefully Spargo's papers, you are not in perfect unison with him throughout. Spargo is unanswerable. If you don't think so, my dear Wells, set to work and answer him.

These are some of the impressions that you have received from reading John Spargo's papers. But

the dominant impression left upon you, the master impression that rounds and binds all these other impressions into perfect unity—No, don't tell me! Let me tell you, just to show you how responsive our sympathies are. The final crowning impression lost on your mind by a careful study of John Spargo's papers, is that of the stupendous absurdity of your presuming to write about Russia at all. And as for offering to guide the opinions of half Europe, not to speak of several hundred Americans—my dear good Wells, my Wells of the giant mind, my ready solver on the instant of all the social, political and religious riddles that puzzle humanity, my plenipotentiary-elect and internuncio of all those who cannot think for themselves,—tell me, O self-beclouded inconsequential philosopher, have I not guessed aright that the prevailing impression in your mind is that of the monstrous, transparent absurdity of your utterances in these five papers, and of your whole position and attitude toward Bolshevism and Russian affairs? You do see how absurd you are, don't you? How our thoughts jump together on all vital matters. What? You don't see how absurd you are? Oh, well, in that case I shall have to show you.

Now please follow me closely. I won't put any unnecessary strain upon you. Your fifth paper opens: "My chief purpose in going from St. Petersburg to Moscow was to see and talk to Lenin. . . .

I was disposed to be hostile to him." A very sound instinct, my dear Wells. This man had sent stolen gold to corrupt the navy that protects you. He had sent emissaries to kindle revolt throughout the British Empire and overturn the Government that pays your dividends. No wonder you were disposed to be hostile to him. A very sound instinct. It does you credit. Always cherish these occasional promptings of your better self. Drop your theories, my dear Wells, and trust to your instincts. You will be a wiser man, and you will work less havoc on the lower levels of European and American political thought.

You had, you tell us, this instinct of hostility toward Lenin. But he had the great attraction of being an enemy of your country, so you spent eighty hours, about half your limited time in Russia, searching for him in the very appropriate company of the "dunnow-wheere 'e are" * sailorman with the stolen silver teapot, wandering and chafing and swearing in vexatious peregrinations. Of course you may argue that these eighty hours were quite as well spent as the remaining hours of your trip, and very much better spent than the far more numerous hours that you spend in thinking for other people. I will yield both points to you. I like to give you a little encouragement. These eighty hours' divagations with the sailorman and the tea-

* "'E dunnow wheere 'e are," popular English music-hall song.

pot, which, seeing that they kept you from formulating theories for the misguidance and misgovernment of mankind, might have been advantageously prolonged to eighty years—these eighty hours' ramblings being brought, as I think, to a premature untimely end, you at length found yourself seated face to face with Lenin. You tell us that you are disposed to be hostile to him, and indeed well you may be. Let us quote your own opinion of Lenin in July, 1918. (See "New York Weekly Review," December 15, 1920.) Writing to somebody whom the editor of "The Weekly Review" describes as the famous megaphonist, who published your letter in his magazine, you say:

"Don't write me down a Bolshevik. I'm a Wilsonite. For the first time in my life there is a man in the world that I am content to follow."—Be careful how you abdicate your leadership of political thought, my dear Wells—"Lenin, I can assure you, is a little beast, like this—" Then followed a drawing of the little beast,—"He (Lenin) just wants power, and when he gets it he has no use for it. . . . He doesn't eat well, or live prettily"—quite out of sympathy with present Russian habits, it seems—"or get children"—shame on him—"or care for beautiful things." No, he seizes them from those who do, and lets them moulder away in the former me, spare me, my dear Wells. Except the invention British Embassy—"He doesn't want order"—Spare

of a new kind of honesty, surely the establishment of order accompanied by universal hunger and want, is the one supreme achievement of statesmanship that you claim for Lenin. You proceed, with a cruel, and I hope not strictly truthful, comparison of Lenin with your eminent Fabian brother, who is reforming the world by statistics—"Lenin is just a Russian Sidney Webb, a rotten little incessant egotistical intriguer."—Dear! Dear! Such a good Fabian too! Dear! Dear!—"He (Lenin, not Sidney Webb) ought to be killed by some moral sanitary authority."

That was your opinion of Lenin in July, 1918—a little beast, a grasper of power which he cannot use, an objectionable feeder, a boorish despiser of pretty living, a wretched celibate, a scorner of beautiful things, a rotten little incessant intriguer, who ought to be killed in the interests of moral sanitation. Since you wrote that description of Lenin he has devastated and depopulated Russia and indirectly tried to cut off your dividends. No wonder, my dear Wells, you entered the Kremlin with a most just and laudable hostility to this man. Nothing in all these papers becomes you so much as that.

Now, purge your eyes and your mind. Summon all your latent perspicacity. Think a little for yourself instead of thinking for other people. Don't get vertiginous. You're in safe hands. Trust to me. I'll pull you through.

What we have to do is to make a strict and searching inquiry, namely, this—What does Lenin do or say in this hour and a half's chat, to change this hostility of yours to such enthusiastic sympathy, admiration and whole-hearted support of his aims, that you advise the American people to place their capital and their industrial resources, to some vast extent, at his disposal? You insistently explain to them that Lenin is governing Russia on vicious, unworkable Marxian principles. You perceive very plainly, and you report that Lenin's aims cannot be achieved, until the "mentality of the whole people" is changed, until "their very souls are remoulded." How long do you allow for that process? Your usual fortnight? You further expose Lenin's policy by showing it to be that of fomenting a war between the United States and Japan. And then you make this monstrous proposal to the American people, that they should go into Bolshevist Russia with their "adequate" resources (could infinite resources be "adequate"), give recognition and help to the man whom you have called a little beast, a rotten little incessant and egotistical intriguer, who ought to be killed for the sake of moral sanitation—and become the supporter, the right hand and consultant of his crazy bankrupt government.

Ho, all fiduciaries of common sense, avenge her rape! Ho, all ye tribes of lexicographers! Ho, all ye hidden powers that mint the American vernacular,

coin me some adjective that will give forth the faintest adumbration of this inexpressible monumental absurdity! Hallmark it, I beseech you, with some new form of speech! I am dumb.

Now, my dear Wells, you do begin to see how absurd you are, don't you? I knew you would. But tell me, sly blagueur, what induced you to attempt this hoax upon American credulity? The American people have done you no harm except to help you to persuade yourself that you are a profound social philosopher—a generous, careless indiscretion of theirs, which you might readily forgive them. On the whole, you owe the American people a debt of gratitude even greater than you owe to me. No, no, my dear Wells; hoax yourself as much as you please, hoax half Europe, but spare those guileless Americans who are so amiably disposed towards you as to allow you to do their thinking for them.

Let us return to our inquiry. 'Tenshun, my dear Wells!

I have again scrupulously studied your fifth paper, and I am more than ever puzzled to find a reason that you should change from well-founded hostility to Lenin to cordial approbation and co-operation with his designs, especially with his demand for American capital. Obviously of all ways to destroy capital, the easiest is to put it anywhere within Lenin's reach, as the state of Russia shows. In your lofty aim of abolishing capital, you are nat-

urally in sympathy with him, and if by conspiring with him, the pair of you can effectually destroy American capital, and bring the United States to something approaching the blessed condition of Russia, you would be justified in overlooking the fact that he is a little beast, a rotten little incessant intriguer, who ought to be killed, &c.

Again, if he can, as he explains that he desires, bring about an alliance between America and Russia, break down the general good understanding between America and England which is the sole guarantee of the world's peace, and thus involve your own country in further grievous perplexities and insecurities, then again you will claim you are justified in feeling a warm friendship for him, and in forgetting that he is a rotten little incessant intriguer, &c., &c., &c. Perhaps it was this noble motive that turned your heart to him.

Further, you agree with Lenin that the world must be turned upside down, inside out, and blasted to pieces before it can be got to turn comfortably upon its own axis. That is another bond of sympathy between you and Lenin. You further agree that in Russia—and pray why not elsewhere?—the mentality of the whole people, their very souls, must be remoulded before we can begin to tidy up the world for the millennium. Lenin would bring about the millennium by Marxism. You would bring it about by Collectivism.

By the way, what is Collectivism? I picture it as a kind of universal Adams Express Company that goes round collecting everybody's goods, the only difference being that Collectivism doesn't deliver them at any discoverable address. Lenin therefore appears to be a good, sound, practical and practicing Collectivist. You say he is a Marxist. And Sidney Webb, you say, is a rotten little incessant egotistical intriguer. I do wish all you good Socialists would agree among yourselves, and then we could settle down in earnest and begin to tidy up the world for the millennium.

At any rate, you and Lenin and Sidney Webb all agree that everybody's property must be "collected" and not returned to him.

But never mind the means, Marxist, collectivist or rotten incessant intriguist, or all three, so long as we get our millennium. Let's have a millennium of some sort, at any intermediate cost of bloodshed, misery, disorder and starvation. Lenin thinks it will take ten years to get a millennium. You are not very definite about the date. But fortnight or ten years, you and Lenin both see a millennium, as plain as a pikestaff before your eyes, with a quite negligible foreground of realities.

My dear Wells, you remind me of the heroine of Sheridan's "Critic." When Tilburina went mad in white satin she saw all sorts of things that weren't there. Her plain, matter-of-fact father, the Gov-

ernor of Tilbury Fort, whom I strongly resemble in my steadfast refusal to see things that aren't there, showered a cold douche of common sense on the ecstatic Tilburina. He soberly addressed her:

> "Peace, daughter!
> The Spanish Fleet thou canst not see,
> Because it is not yet in sight."

When I see you, my dear Wells, decking yourself in bridal anticipation of the millennium in phrases of white satin, to be paid for by some future Collectivist State, going distracted as Tilburina, and seeing all sorts of things that aren't there—when I see you in this condition, I feel that prose is inadequate and that your necessities call upon me to deal with you in iambics:

> Peace, Godson!
> This Heaven on Earth thou canst not see,
> Because it is not yet in sight.

Well, now, I'm sure you see how absurd you are. That's right! Brave lad! It needs a good deal of courage, but it's a most wholesome state of mind. Many a man's worst ills come upon him from not knowing when he's making himself absurd. Brave lad! I shall make a good British citizen of you before I've done with you.

You will own that I have had a rather stiff job, that at times you have shown yourself impervious

to reason, oblivious of logic, amorous of fallacy, contumacious to facts in your dealing with them. If I hadn't coaxed and wheedled you in my gentle urbane way, you might not have quite realised how unfathomably absurd you are—eh? What? What, my dear Wells! You don't even now see how absurd you are?

Really, my dear Wells, this is too bad of you! You are imposing too much on my good nature. Just as I thought I'd lured you on to do a bit of clear thinking, if not about Russia, at least about yourself, you back out, and I shall have all my trouble over again. I have been very lenient to you hitherto, but there are limits. Then you don't even now see how absurd you are?

What about the following passages in your fifth paper?

You tell us that the elaborate arrangements necessary for the personal security of Lenin put him out of reach of Russia, and what is more serious, put Russia out of his reach. The filtering processes that have to go on, upward and downward, backward and forward, block all free communication between him and the Russian masses. Lenin, you show us, has no personal or political access to the people he is governing, and they have no access to him. Yet, my dear Wells, you advise the Americans, pretty innocents, to put vast sums of money and vast industrial equipment at the disposal of a Govern-

ment that rules in tyrannic isolation from the people. It must be this principle of tyrannic isolation from the will of the people that makes Bolshevist government so attractive to that section of our English working classes who are urging our own Government to recognise and embrace Lenin and his associates. Is democracy resolved to destroy democracy? Look at Greece.

Once more, my dear Wells. You offer the Americans another inducement to make this gilt-edged investment. You tell us that in their endeavour to establish a social and economic order by means of taking away everybody's property, these communists, "at a hundred points, do not know what to do." They are like your sailorman with the teapot: "'E dunnow where 'e are." I suppose it is this bottomless confusion of governmental aims, the natural attraction of like to like, which again draws that section of our English working classes who cannot think for themselves, to further Bolshevist activities in England. They "dunnow where they are."

Why persuade confiding Americans to place their surplus cash in the hands of a "dunnow-where-'e-are" Government? You are superb, unapproachable, when you employ your "giant mind" on a theory. I never met a man with a better assortment of theories. Why not work out a theory of permutable equations at Monte Carlo, take all the shiploads of Americans who believe in you to that paradise of

investors and give them a good time, with a good, solid chance of making some money? I'll come with you.

Yet once again, my dear Wells. Perhaps the most delightful of all your waggeries in this fifth paper is your confession that you had never realised till you went to Petrograd "that the whole form and arrangement of a town is determined by shopping and marketing, and that the abolition of these things renders nine-tenths of the buildings in an ordinary town directly or indirectly meaningless and useless."

When I read that I called out to Archibald Spofforth, "Wells has got a glimmering."

"It's about time he had," Spofforth growled. Spofforth's manner toward you disgusts me. It is so disrespectful. His tone showed that he grudged you even this most rudimentary perception of cause and effect.

"Listen to this," I said, and I read to Spofforth the succeeding passages, where you and Lenin agreed that by the operation of his principles, or by the operation of yours, in any case by the abolition of shopping and marketing, the existing towns would dissolve away and for the most part become a dead, forsaken waste. You don't seem to have troubled about what would become of the inhabitants. Presumably nine-tenths of them would dissolve away, too, as indeed they are already doing.

In the discussion of this blissful future for Russia,

Lenin's heart warmed toward you and you forgot your hostility to the "little beast," the "rotten little incessant egotistical intriguer," &c., who "ought to be killed by some moral sanitary authority." How could you harbour hostility to a man who was not merely writing about pulling civilisation to pieces, but was actually engaged in this beneficent work?

The hour and a half passed cheerfully away, well worth the eighty hours you had spent with the sailorman and the teapot to obtain the interview. Lenin might be talking Marxian nonsense, while you were talking Collectivist nonsense. The great bond of union between you was that you were both talking nonsense, that perpetual freemasonry and link of brotherhood between all mankind. Lenin's nonsense may be a different kind of nonsense from your nonsense, but take my word for it, my dear Wells, both kinds of nonsense are equally mischievous, and tend to the destruction of civil liberty, the dissolution of social order and the ruin of civilisation. You don't think that this is the tendency of your kind of nonsense? Ah, my dear Wells, Lenin's nonsense has been put into practice, and its result is apparent. Your nonsense hasn't been put into practice—yet.

But at least your visit to Russia brought about your belated realisation of the fact, very obvious to everybody who had given a moment's consideration to the matter, that the abolition of private property and of the established modes and codes of commer-

cial intercourse, results in laying waste nine-tenths of the habitable quarters of every town, while nine-tenths of the wretched inhabitants perish or go to—Lenin knows where. Ask him. And ask the desperate, poverty-stricken, miserable Russian refugees who have fled from him to New York. They don't like this new Utopia that Lenin is providing for them. They won't like your Utopia any better—when they get it.

Well, now, my dear Wells, one plain, serious question—Do you, or do you not see how absurd you are in your pretensions to be a social philosopher? In the absence of any express denial from you, I shall take it for granted that you agree with me, and that you do see how absurd you are. Well, that matter is settled. I have marked down in this fifth paper of yours exactly seventy-six passages, phrases and inferences which bear more or less on this important question which I have asked you for your soul's good. Seventy-six there are in all. I have dealt with only a few of them. Will it be necessary for me to examine a few more, or all of them, before you give me your answer? I am at your service.

If you insist that I shall proceed any further, I think you ought to hold out to me some prospect of a little bonus for myself. I have already lost, in my bet to Spofforth, a new, shiny silk top hat because of my undue confidence in you. Now, great

as are my objections to your social theories, I have a still greater objection to losing my money upon you. I think you are bound in all fairness to give me a chance of getting it back. I am willing to take the risk. I'll bet you a new, shiny silk top hat—a nondescript billycock for you, if you think it more becoming, or more symbolic of your principles—I'll bet you a new, shiny silk top hat that if I do examine these seventy-six passages in your fifth paper—or as many of them as are relevant—I'll bet you a new, shiny silk hat that when I've finished with you, whether or not you think yourself absurd, you won't be able to find ten men all over the United States who can think for themselves, and who will not say that in these papers of yours on Russia you have not only made yourself absurd, but that you have made absurdity itself ridiculous in any attempt to compete with you.

Come, my dear Wells, be a sport. Take me on. Civilisation, as you complacently predict, may be in ruins before you have to pay up. Is it a bet? Yes, my dear Wells, it may be that our present civilisation is approaching its end, and that end will hardly be a peaceful one. But the dissolution of the present social order will not be brought about because men have refused to accept your "modern ideas." It will be brought about because, in their private lives, men have neglected and disobeyed certain plain old rules of conduct, because in their public lives they

have defied and legislated against certain first changeless principles and economic laws which form the basis of all government, of all civil order, and of all common social life.

To sum up your articles on "Russia in the Shadows": There is nothing in them that can help the Russian people to regain security, comfort and prosperity. There are some things that may encourage them to further revolution and anarchy. There are many passages in them that foster treason to your own country; there are other passages that are treason to humanity; worst blot of all, there are not a few passages that are treason to common sense.

HENRY ARTHUR JONES.

P. S.—I enclose herewith a thoughtful little pamphlet entitled "The Folly of Having Opinions —a Perennial Caution to Mankind." I hope you will read it and treasure it. It is the last copy in existence, but I think you have more need of it than myself. The author is anonymous, but I suspect Spofforth.

30th December, 1920.

LETTER NINE.

THE FABIAN BEANFEAST.

My Dear Wells,—

It may be a good habit, or it may be a bad habit, and this is a matter upon which you are supremely qualified to have an opinion—but in either case it is clear that I have now got into a hopelessly confirmed habit of writing letters to you. The persistency of a habit, once it has been acquired, was never more forcibly illustrated. I can no more help writing letters to you than you can help making excuses for Bolshevism, or filling your head with impracticable ideas about Collectivism. When I rise in the morning, my first thought, even before I order my breakfast, is—"What can I do to set Wells right today?" All my waking hours, I am seeking to put my thoughts into plain simple words, so that you may easily comprehend what I say to you. And at night, having nourished myself with such fare as may most easily promote digestion, and thus quicken my mental powers so that they may be all the more readily and faithfully at your service,—at night, as I lay me down, I ask myself, "Have I done my duty to Wells today? Having accepted this responsible post

of being his candid friend, have I been candid enough with him? Have I persuaded him to challenge and probe his own theories, to ask himself how they are to be worked in this actual world wherein we live, and amongst its actual inhabitants? Have I got him to see how mischievous he is in trying to weaken the authority of his own government, and to strengthen the forces of Bolshevism? Have I warned him off recommending the guileless Americans to put their cash and resources in the hands of a government, which, having repudiated its debts, pillaged its wretched people, and destroyed its own capital, is now anxious to get hold of American capital which it avows it will use to engage America in a war with Japan? Above all, have I convinced Wells how absurd beyond absurdity he is in trying to handle these matters at all? Have I been candid enough with Wells?" And all the time I find myself yielding more and more to this irresistible impulse to write another letter to "My dear Wells."

The fact is, I have grown to like it. Such is the force of habit. Now if while I am giving myself a pleasure, I am also doing you a service, as I assure myself I am, why shouldn't I keep on? It has now become a pressing question with me, how many of the remaining years of my life I shall have to spend in this fascinating pursuit of putting you right in your thinking. Perhaps you had better first decide

whether my habit of writing to "My dear Wells" is a good one or a bad one. For myself, I confess I have now become so addicted to it that, good or bad, I cannot break it off. I am therefore helplessly at the mercy of your decision.

If you think it is a good habit, you will encourage me in it by continuing to furnish me with material such as you lavished upon me in these papers on Russia, and in your various budgets of "modern ideas." If on the other hand, you think it a bad habit that I have fallen into, you will say, "Henry Arthur Jones must be stopped. I'll cut off his supplies. I won't issue any more fallacies about Bolshevism, or indeed upon any question. From this time, I'll keep silence. That will settle him."

Though I must own that such a declaration by you would be for the general good, and would tend towards less public bewilderment of thought, yet it would cause me some personal disappointment. I should miss something in life. But what could I do? I should have to submit. And you would have the satisfaction of knowing that you had cured me of what you considered to be a bad habit.

In my last letter I dealt with a few of the seventy-six points you had offered for my consideration in your fifth paper on Russia. Being urged by this unconquerable, inappeasable desire to keep on writing to "My dear Wells," I sadly reflected that this was the last of your papers on Russia. I felt like

the old soap boiler, who, although he had retired from business, could not keep away from the factory. I looked again over the five papers with all their wealth of confusion, fallacy, and perversity, and conning them afresh, I ruefully recognised how many golden opportunities I had lost through yielding to my humane prompting to spare you. I was thinking that, by way of keeping my hand in, I would bring to your notice a few more of the startling lapses and discrepancies that these papers contain, when the English mail arrived, and amongst my letters were Mr. Winston Churchill's reply to you in the "London Sunday Express" of December 12, 1920, and your further reply to him in the same paper on the 19th December.

Certainly there will be no reason for me to hark back upon your past delinquencies, while you continue to provide me with such ample stores of material for comment as are to be found in your reply to Mr. Winston Churchill ("London Sunday Express," December 19th). Why, my dear Wells, in this one letter alone there is matter that will give me hard employment for a month. It took Tristram Shandy two years to write the history of the first day of his life. I would not say that I might not give two years to the examination of this letter, and spend the time most profitably for the public and for yourself, while finding pleasant occupation for myself all the while. I am sure you never thought

when you were writing that paper that it contained such latent possibilities. You should realise a little more clearly, my dear Wells, what cogent implications and inevitable expansions may be germinating in every sentence you write.

To return to this reply of yours to Mr. Winston Churchill. You may ask me why I should intervene in your correspondence with Mr. Winston Churchill. For this reason, my dear Wells. I feel very strongly that the theories you are spreading with so much diligence amongst those who cannot think for themselves, tend towards the further insecurity, the disintegration and destruction of the British Empire. The diffusion of these theories is especially dangerous at the present moment, when we are beset with so many difficulties. Now I think that all things considered, the British Empire, however imperfect it may be, and open to improvement in many ways, does yet offer to its hundreds of millions of citizens an average degree of security, comfort and happiness, immeasurably greater than they would enjoy if it were pulled to pieces. Do you say that you don't want to see it pulled to pieces? My dear Wells, that would be the certain result of the application of your theories. You will find that, incidentally and implicitly, you have proved as much in your tenebrous papers on Russia. Read them over again.

Well, I don't want the British Empire to be

pulled to pieces, or made any more risky and uncomfortable to live in than it is at present. To prevent you and other haters of England from pulling our Empire to pieces is my supreme object in writing you these letters. Let us never lose sight of that. I may indeed snatch a few chances of diverting and tickling you, as we go along, but that is only by way of giving you and myself a little relief from the deadly serious business in which we are engaged.

For make no mistake, my dear Wells, upon the right solution of the questions at issue between you and me, depend the security and welfare of millions of our fellow creatures. And all these questions run into one question, that insists on being answered before the world can settle into something like peace and security. Merezhkovsky, in a piercing letter to you, puts that question thus—"At this moment, not we Russians alone, but all the peoples of the earth are divided into two camps—for the Bolshevists and against them." More than two years ago, in the autumn of 1918, while that other less foul, less tyrannic militarism was yet uncrushed, I put that same question in other words to your fellow countrymen and mine—"Patriotism or Internationalism—O England, which road will you take?"

My whole argument is contained in Chapter 5 of my "Patriotism and Popular Education." It is

open to you to study what I have there said, and to refute me if I am wrong.

We will now return to your reply to Mr. Winston Churchill. Why, my dear Wells, you offer me an inexhaustible mine for my exploration. In this paper ("London Sunday Express," December 19, 1920) perhaps even more than in your papers on Russia, you betray the texture of your mind, you reveal your method of controversy, you expose the quality of your arguments, and what is more relative to my general purpose, you give us a measure of your competence to think for other people. For all these reasons, a searching examination of your reply to Mr. Churchill will have a permanent interest and value beyond the discussion of the appertaining facts. It will remain as a Wellsometer, always available for reference whenever you launch your theories on mankind.

Let us first glance at Mr. Churchill's paper ("London Sunday Express," December 5, 1920). He rapidly sketches your attitude towards Bolshevism, and then as rapidly reviews the leading movements and developments of civilization that brought about a great accumulation of world wealth and prosperity at the beginning of this century. He shows that Bolshevism and its kindred heresies are a reversal of those alleviations and bettering of the conditions of the masses, which had accompanied the

general prosperity of the two or three preceding generations. In one short apt sentence, he plainly sets before this distracted world the alternative result that will follow from its adoption or refusal of Merezhkovsky's "Bolshevism or Anti-Bolshevism," or as I have put it, "Patriotism or Internationalism." My formula is fundamentally the same as Merezhkovsky's. According as the nations choose the one road or the other, Mr. Churchill tells them in a dozen words what will be the inevitable alternative result:

A WORLD OF EQUALLY HUNGRY SLAVES

or

A WORLD OF UNEQUALLY PROSPEROUS FREEMEN.

With much force Mr. Churchill exhibits the parallel between Cancer in the human body and Bolshevism in the social and political economy of a nation. The whole paper is a clear, swift, succinct statement of the matter in debate. How do you deal with it? Mr. Churchill has attacked your main positions. Let us study your counter-attack. I am not here mainly concerned with the facts of the case, or with the conclusions you and Mr. Churchill draw from them. They have been already discussed between us. I am here concerned to question and to test your ability to deal with any difficult questions

of politics or economics whatsoever; your competence to think for "half Europe," or even for the smallest number of people who cannot think for themselves; indeed I hope I shall go so far as to get you to share my doubt as to whether you are able to think clearly for yourself, without severe guidance. I have thus defined what is, for the time, the object of our deliberations. 'Tenshun, my dear Wells!

Throwing one sweeping penetrating glance over the whole field of Bolshevism, the main questions about it, questions that concern the whole world, are these:

First question, and most important because it must be answered before we can safely handle the other questions:—Is Bolshevism firmly established? Is it going to last? Upon this most urgent question of all, you tell us that you hold two directly contradictory opinions. In your third paper you say: *"To-day the Bolshevist government sits, I believe, in Moscow, as firmly established as any Government in Europe—"* Farther on in the same paper you say: *"If we help to pull down the by no means firmly established government in Moscow—"* With incredible obscurity of thought and sublime audacity of assertion, your reply to this first urgent question is as follows: "Bolshevism is firmly established. Bolshevism is *not* firmly established. It

is going to last. It is *not* going to last. Just whichever suits the exigencies of my theory for the moment."

Second question:—If Bolshevism is not firmly established, how long is it going to last, and how far is it likely to spread?

Third question:—What will be the consequences and reactions of Bolshevism on the rest of the world?

Fourth question:—How far will it be safe and wise for the governments of Western Europe, and more especially for America, to recognise Bolshevism, make treaties with it, support it, and trade with it? What securities can Bolshevism offer that it will fulfil any political and commercial obligations?

These four groups of questions cover all the essential matters of the debate in which you, Mr. John Spargo, Mr. Winston Churchill and myself have been engaged. All the other matters that have been brought into discussion are merely secondary, illustrative, incidental, or comparatively irrelevant and negligible.

Now please take Mr. Churchill's article ("London Sunday Express," Dec. 5, 1920) and read it carefully through. You will find that, with the exception of a few opening compliments to yourself, Mr. Churchill is mainly and intently occupied throughout his paper in the discussion of the four groups of

questions that I have marked out above. He does not wander away in vague and wild digressions. As schoolboys say, he is "on to the ball" all the time.

Now I will ask you to take up your own reply to Mr. Churchill ("London Sunday Express," Dec. 12, 1920). Please to spread it in front of you and analyze it. I find that your article contains 537 printed lines. You are debating with your opponent upon the most serious of all questions that just now concern mankind. How many lines of your paper would you say should be given to argument upon the matters at issue? Fix in your mind the least number of lines out of 537, that your readers might reasonably expect you to set apart for plain simple argument that makes an appeal to their judicial faculties.

My dear Wells, there is scarcely one line in your whole paper that makes such an appeal. There are 17 lines which you might doubtfully claim as argument, and which I will allow you. Of the remaining 520 lines, you give no less than 165, almost a third of the whole paper, to personal detraction, insinuation, comment and criticism relating to Mr. Churchill, his career, his character, his mistakes, his political aims and ambitions,—all of these 165 lines widely away from the matter in debate. Of the remaining 355 lines, you are concerned in 149 of them with your own theories, with slipping into the

text your own stock notions and vague unworkable idealisms, assuming every one of them to be verified, unquestionable, and practical. Incidentally you discover to us that your mind is a mechanical apparatus that works upon facts with a spasmodic reversible action, and tosses them out from it in hopeless self-contradictions and confusions. The remaining 206 lines of your paper are taken up with unclassifiable generalities and irrelevancies. Thus an analysis of the 537 lines of your paper shows the following results:

17 lines are given to doubtful argument.
165 lines, nearly a third, to defaming Mr. Churchill.
149 lines to illogical advancement of your own theories.
206 lines to general unclassifiable irrelevancies.

537 lines—TOTAL.

Do you say that in the 537 lines, there is a single one more than 17 that can be legitimately classed as argument? I'll make you a handsome offer. I will give you one pound sterling, to be spent in charity, for every line above 17 that you can reasonably claim as argument dealing with the questions at issue. The chances that I keep on offering you!

Surely, my dear Wells, you will be able to find some thirty or forty additional lines of argument, so that whenever you make one of your periodical

betrumpeted descents upon the world with a brand new gospel of philosophy, history, sociology or religion, you will be able to boast that at least a tenth part of it is worth some consideration.

Well, what do you say to my offer? You accept it of course, partly for the sake of your reputation, but chiefly for the sake of charity. Let us think in what charitable way we shall spend these thirty or forty, or perhaps a hundred pounds, that you will mulct me for my carelessness in overlooking your additional lines of argument.

We could have a lot of ragged children or aged couples to tea. It doesn't sound very lively. Or we could give a splendid treat to wounded soldiers. But we needn't bother about wounded soldiers, now that the war is over. They are fast becoming a nuisance. Besides, the trade unions might object to our relieving wounded soldiers.

What do you suggest? There are the hospitals. There are thousands of necessitous poor, and there will be thousands more as we progressively educate our working classes to avoid manual labour. Now that there is so much unemployment in the house building trades, we might find a few deserving bricklayers—Stop! I've got it. Charity begins at home. What has become of the Fabian Society?

I suppose it is still in existence, and I suppose it consists of more than three members, although I've

never heard of more than three. The general body of the Fabian Society must be badly in need of a little relaxation after a course of your philosophy and Mr. Sidney Webb's statistics. We'll give the Fabian Society a picnic, eh? A thorough jolly good outing, where we shall not only be doing them a charity, but getting some fun for ourselves.

Then it's settled we spend the thirty, forty, or hundred pounds you are going to get out of me, in giving the Fabian Society a picnic. We won't call it a picnic. We'll call it a beanfeast. It sounds jollier, and it's more democratic. Not a mere ordinary beanfeast, but quite a classy kind of beanfeast. We'll have a four-in-hand and take them down to Hampton Court, and on to see Windsor Castle. How many Fabians are there? Will one coach hold them all? Never mind. One, two, a dozen coaches if necessary. I hope you'll find enough additional lines of argument amongst the 537 to cover the expenses. If you don't, I'll stand all the costs of the outing. I'm determined to give the Fabians a beanfeast. Tally-ho! Tally-ho!

Now let's arrange the details. We'll have a band. I should like it to play national airs. It's a long time since the Fabians have heard them. As I provide the beanfeast, I really must insist on driving the coach. I'll get a new coaching rig-out for the occasion, and I shall stick a Union Jack in my beaver

hat. It would be a pleasing concession to their host, if the Fabians would do the same. And we'll have some very spirited horses, and give them—and the Fabians—beans.

Tally-ho! Tally-ho!

You are suspecting that this is a cunning design of mine to lure the Fabians on to the top of a coach, and turn them all over into a ditch. Not at all, my dear Wells. It's true that I've never driven a four-in-hand, but the Fabians will be vastly more safe in my care than "half of Europe" is in yours.

One or two more details. No prostitution of our natural good sense to statistics, or anarchic sociology, or International vagaries, but just a day of sheer rollicking amongst vivid live human realities.

Tally-ho! Tally-ho!

And as we break up, after a day, which though devoted to roaring frolic, will yet I hope convey a profound moral lesson to the Fabians,—before we part, we will stand in a circle and sing the National Anthem. You won't sing the National Anthem? I think you will, after a while, if I only handle you long enough and suavely enough. You might begin practicing.

Hey! Hey! Hey! All this while, I've been forgetting that this Fabian beanfeast depends upon your finding that in your discourse of 537 lines, there are more than 17 of them that attempt to grapple with

your subject. Search it again. How many more can you find? My cheque book is on the table before me. Send in your claim.

Expectantly yours,

HENRY ARTHUR JONES.

New York City,
January 13, 1921.

In answer to my repeated invitations to Mr. Wells to take some share in this controversy, he was so obliging as to send a letter to the London Evening Standard of December 25, 1920. As I anticipated, he did not attempt to meet me in argument. He followed the course I had suggested to him (see Letter 8, p. 73) and called me a liar—this time an "out-and-out liar." He accused me of "vanity," of "trading on the careless hospitalities of his younger days." He spoke of my heart being "full of malice," of my having an "incurable grudge" against him, of my "dreary hostility," of my "everlasting hooting and lying," with other like elegancies of controversy. A little inconsistently, he complained that I bored him, and he suggested to his readers that they should also feel bored with me. He compared me with a foghorn—"You never know when the damned thing won't be hooting again." But he never attempted to meet me in argument. Indeed in a letter to the New York Times of 6th January

1921, Mr. Wells magnificently announced, "I never argue with Mr. H. A. Jones." We must allow Mr. Wells to be the best judge of his own limitations.

H. A. J.

LETTER TEN.

THE WICKED MR. WINSTON CHURCHILL.

My Dear Wells,—

The wise men of Laputa, as Gulliver tells us, were so absorbed in their own ideas, and so rapt away from the obvious facts under their nose, that they needed a constant attendant to recall them to the actualities of life, so that they might not damage themselves by knocking their heads against any post, or by falling over any precipice that was in their way. These attendants carried a blown bladder, fastened like a flail at the end of a stick, and filled with dry peas or little pebbles. They were called "flappers"—a name which is now used to denote a much less useful class of persons. Whenever it was necessary to waken a Laputan philosopher to some obstacle in his path, or get him to abandon his vagaries and listen to serious discourse, his flapper would give him a slap on the face with the bladder.

Being impressed with your startling resemblance to the Laputan philosophers, I resolved that I would

put aside less urgent business and constitute myself your flapper—in the Laputan sense.

I had just come to this decision, when I received a copy of the "Evening Standard" of Dec. 28, 1920, containing your letter to the editor which begins thus: "Sir, being written at by Mr. H. A. Jones is like living near some sea channel with a foghorn. You never know when the damned thing won't begin hooting again."

I was struck with the appropriateness of your comparison of myself to a foghorn. My dear Wells, the image is perfect. Instantly I pictured you as some dreadful succubus of compact palpable fog, haunting and waylaying ships on the main ocean highways, exhaling mists and vapours of Collectivism, and enticing victims from "half Europe" on to the sand-banks of Internationalism. Naturally you find a foghorn annoying, and wish the "damned thing" would stop.

Foghorns have always had a peculiar attraction for me. The moment you suggested I should be one, I leaped at the chance. It then occurred to me that I had just undertaken the arduous post of being your "flapper"—in the Laputan sense. The question is, can I combine the rather incongruous duties of flapper and foghorn? Why not? Without for a moment remitting my personal attendance upon your heedless steps, I can at the same time give out loud prolonged warnings to all whom you have

enshrouded in fog, "Keep off the sand-banks of Internationalism."

My dear Wells, you shall not say that I failed you. I accept the double responsibility. I will be both flapper and foghorn. I am quite taken with the idea of being a foghorn. The only fault of a foghorn is its tiresome tautophony. Its possibilities as a musical instrument have never been tested. I intend to be quite a new kind of foghorn. I shall not only give out some tremendous booms and hoots and groans and blasts and howls, but I shall also play a few lively tunes—you will be inclined to dance to them.

Your letter proceeds: "Mr. Jones trades on the careless hospitalities of my younger days to address me as 'My dear Wells'." In years gone by I did indeed listen on several evenings to your philosophy, and also to your performances on the pianola. I did not then criticize your philosophy, but I did then, and can now, honestly praise you as a master on the pianola. You always knew exactly what tunes it was going to play, and you played it with such delicacy and sureness of touch that I found it less mechanical than your philosophy. O, if you had as sovereign a command of social philosophy as you have of the pianola!

If I was so forgetful as not to return your hospitality, I hope you will redress the wrongs I have done you in that respect by coming with a ferocious

appetite on the day when I take the Fabians to their beanfeast at Windsor. I do not think you should object to my calling you "My dear Wells." To me there is something caressing in the sound. I use it to show you how wrongly you estimate me, when you say that my heart "seems full of malice," and that I have an "incurable grudge" against you. Believe me, my dear Wells, I have no incurable grudge, or any personal malice or ill will towards you, beyond the just fierce anger that I feel against all the tribe of theorists, sophists, casuists, wordsters, factdodgers, logicdodgers, truthdodgers, phrase-mongers, pettifoggers, doctrinaires, futilitarians and impossiblists, who "think" like you, and always "think" against England; who put scales on their eyes, and wax in their ears, and poison on their tongues to prove that England is always in the wrong and that her enemies are always in the right. I want to strike at them all through you. I want to show the quality of their "thinking" when they "think" against their country, and when in these perilous times, they seek to multiply her embarrassments and insecurities, and give her over to disorder and revolution. But you are a bad judge of character, my dear Wells, if you think that beyond this feeling I have any personal malice against you. All that I am trying to do is to make you a good British citizen. Submit patiently to the process, and you will find it the less grievous.

You complain that I have not read the whole of your writings. Surely you would not have me criticize those works of yours which I have not read. You will admit that I am doing ample justice to such of them as have come in my way. I am quite ready to believe that those numerous volumes of yours which I have not read, contain equally rich veins of sophistry and fallacy which it may be equally necessary for me to investigate. Bide your time, my dear Wells. Let me finish with those writings of yours which I have studied, and I will then turn my attention to the others.

You also complain that these letters of mine bore you. My dear Wells, I am always pointing out to you the most obvious things which you have failed to notice. Let me point out to you the most obvious thing of all—that if my letters bore you, you have the easiest and plainest way of escape. Why not take it?

You again call me a liar—nay, this time it seems that I am not only a liar, but I am an "out-and-out liar." You will recall that in one of my recent letters, I advised you to take this line of reply to me. I felt sure you would follow my advice.

And now, having touched upon the most interesting points in your letter to the "Evening Standard" of Dec. 28th, we may return to the matters that were engaging us when I finished my last letter. We arranged that we would take your reply to Mr.

Winston Churchill as the basis of a strict inquiry into your methods of "thinking for half Europe," and into your capacity for performing this stupendous intellectual operation—in short as a Wellsometer. Henceforth we are not concerned with the Bolshevist leaders or Bolshevist principles, except as these may incidentally serve to guide us in our inquiry. We have now addressed ourselves to the more general and more important question of the quality and value of your statements, arguments and theories as a popular social and political philosopher.

At the end of my last letter, I was uncertain whether you would accept my suggestion that you should begin to practise the National Anthem, or whether you would examine your reply to Mr. Winston Churchill with the object of discovering how many lines, more than a doubtful 17 out of the 537 it contained—you could claim as argument upon the matters in debate. Doubtless you are at this moment busily occupied in this search, with the view of providing the Fabian brotherhood with a super-magnificent beanfeast at my expense. You will let me know the result of your search.

Meantime we will take a glance at the 165 lines, out of the 537, which you allot to the personal detraction and abuse of Mr. Churchill. I do not know him, but he seems to be a very wicked, ambitious, reckless man. When I read your description of him, I felt grateful to Providence that my lot had

been cast, not with selfish, ambitious politicians, but amongst the serene altruisms of the theatre, where the personal aims and ambitions of actors and actresses are never allowed to interfere with the success of the play, or with the interests of the British drama.

But I am sorry to learn that Mr. Churchill's conduct is so bad that, in your reply to him, you felt obliged to enlarge upon it to the extent of 165 lines, which only left you 17 lines for argument on the matters you are disputing with him. Sad, sad, it is, my dear Wells, to reflect upon what stuff our Cabinet Ministers are made of. You never know what they are up to. Sad, sad it is, my dear Wells, that we have only the staple of human nature from whence to choose our politicians, our public officials, our clergymen, and even our Socialists and Internationalists. Why, you even describe your eminent Fabian brother as a "rotten little incessant egotistical intriguer." Sad, sad it is! Such a good Fabian too! And yet apparently almost as undesirable a man to manage our affairs for us as Mr. Churchill himself. Sad, sad it is!

In your recent exhaustive researches in world history, have you met with any instance where the administration of any country was not more or less pervaded by elements of personal ambition and self-seeking? I am anxious to know how you are going to keep them out of the government of your

Collectivist State. If you don't take care, my dear Wells, these rotten little incessant egotistical intriguers (Lenin, to wit), and these dominant energetic ambitious adventurers will seize the reins of power in your Collectivist Commonwealth, and make it anything but the universal happy garden city that you have hatched in your head; while in addition to their malign overseership, your Collectivist State will be liable to its own peculiar evils.

Its vast bureaucracy will be saturated with the dull lethargic incompetence and multiplying corruption that are inseparable from the State employment of great numbers in the business of looking after other people's business. You complain of the hidebound stupidity and complacent ignorance of our present government staffs. Wait till you get your Collectivist State with an army of officials five or ten times as great. Surely the blundering waste and expense attendant upon the Socialistic legislation that was necessarily introduced during the war, has taught us a stern and final lesson. Not only has it shown us how incompetent the State is to manage all our property and all our affairs, but it has forced us to the other extreme of asking, "Is there any business at all that the State can handle for us, except at a greater ultimate cost to the community, than it could be handled by private persons who would be rewarded according to the measure, amount and value of the work they do for the public?"

I don't see, my dear Wells, how your Collectivistic State can be got to work, unless you personally superintend every detail of its working, in the intervals of launching your successive newspaper booms. Only by your constant supervision will you be able to exclude reckless wicked men of the Churchill type from elbowing their way into the management of the concern. I told you there are wicked men in the world who won't let your theories work. And from what you say of Mr. Winston Churchill, he seems to be one of them. How shall we get into possession of our happy contented Collectivist State, unless all selfish aims and ambitions are ruled out of order by a vote of the majority?

I do wish you would consider this question, my dear Wells. I did advise you not to take that trip to Russia. But you would go. How much more profitably and comfortably you could have spent your time, if instead of wandering about Moscow in the company of a "dunnow-wheere-'e-are" sailorman with a stolen teapot, and using bad language at him —if instead of wasting your precious hours in these cheerless perambulations and profane maledictions, you had stayed at home, and had seated yourself cosily at your own fireside, in quiet darkened surroundings favourable to thought, and had there remained pondering and turning over in your giant mind the questions I am putting to you.

It is not too late. You can even now begin to

study the questions that you are writing about at such length in the papers. First ask yourself this: "There being in the world a number of wicked, ambitious men like Winston Churchill, how can I keep them out of the administration of my Collectivist Commonwealth, seeing that these, and also 'rotten little incessant egotistical intriguers,' are the kind of men who are apt to push themselves to the front in any government, and who will be doubly harmful, nay absolutely destructive, in any Collectivist State which is founded upon the theory that it will be perpetually administered by perfectly capable, perfectly honest statesmen who will have no selfish aims or personal ambitions?" That, my dear Wells, is one of the questions you have to ask yourself.

Further, and more important, is this question: "How can I get the vast majority of men and women to be so obliging, within the next fortnight, or say six months, as to change their natural instincts, desires, and motives for action, so thoroughly and so completely that for the future they will work heartily for the advancement of my theories and for the welfare of my Collectivist State, instead of working for themselves, for their wives and families, for the advancement of their own interests and the increase of their own comforts and pleasures?"

That is the second question you have to ask yourself. I do not say that great numbers of our fellow men are not capable of exalted heroisms and self-

sacrifices. The war plainly showed it. Our English working men and women in their rallies to the defence of their class interests and their trade unions, constantly prove that they are possessed of splendid endurance, courage, heroism, self-denial for their comrades, unflinching devotion to a cause. In themselves these are very noble qualities. They are, however, most mischievous and dangerous when they are used to back the purpose of any one class in a nation to paralyze and exterminate the other classes. For such a purpose cannot be achieved without bringing all classes in the nation, that is the nation itself, to progressive misery and ruin.

This is the plain object lesson and warning which Russia is offering today to our English working men. For them, for their behoof, has this spectacle, this passion play of a whole people vicariously bearing the sins of false thinkers and false teachers, this infernal Calvary with its millions of martyrs—for the fixed contemplation of our English working men has this horrible pageant of misery, crime, disease, starvation and ruin, been designed and played sans intermission, night and day, for three years with a continent for a stage. And we know not how many acts have yet to be played—will the curtain never be rung down that we may go to our homes and sleep in our beds? For you, O English working men, has this mad interminable extravaganza of

murder and dance and chorus of demons been arranged, and in all its details most perfectly stage managed, most perfectly played—there's a terrible moral in it all—will you give heed? I take up my New York paper, and I read that you are shouting down Mr. Clynes and clamouring for Soviets.

You didn't quite catch the meaning of it all, my dear Wells. Your head was full of your theories, so you hobnobbed in the Kremlin with the rotten little incessant egotistical intriguer, and compared respective Utopias with him. You come back to your own country, and you imagine that you can use these great and noble qualities which great numbers of our English working men undoubtedly possess—endurance, fortitude, heroism, self-denial, comradeship, devotion to a cause—you imagine that you can use these great qualities possessed by a more or less considerable section of our working men, to inflame the whole mass of them to start a brand new Collectivist International State, founded upon your theory that the bulk of mankind can be got to shape their conduct and regulate their lives for the benefit of your State; that is, to disregard and renounce all their individual interests that are in opposition to the general welfare of your State; that is, to act from motives quite contrary to the main motives which through all ages have mainly prompted the actions of the majority of mankind.

You are not in communion with facts, my dear

Wells. You are in communion with your whimsies. There may be great alleviations and betterment of the average lot of our working men—I wish it with all my heart. There may be great and beneficent changes brought about by their combination and cooperation in such movements as are for the general welfare of their own State, and in certain limited ways for the welfare of some other States. But this cooperation and combination will be beneficial to them, only as far as it does not shake and weaken the authority of their own government, the security of their own State. Any attempt to start your International Collectivist State could only be successful in so far as it disintegrated and destroyed the government that does actually protect us all from anarchy and chaos; protects our working men from living in such hunger and misery and enslavement as the Russian workers are now enduring; and incidentally does also, let me again remind you, secure your own enjoyment of your motor car and cosy dividends. Let this last consideration have due weight with you.

The very great majority of mankind, my dear Wells, will never act from such motives as your Collectivist State presupposes they will suddenly acquire, will never guide their general conduct with the view of fitting it to the necessities of your theories. Great numbers of men in all nations are capable, under stress and emergency, of rising to lofty

united efforts of heroism, self-sacrifice and endurance, and of banding themselves in closest fellowship and aim for some general good beyond their own immediate palpable self-interest. But these efforts last only for a period, and are followed by reaction and lassitude. The very great majority of men will continue to act mainly from the same motives that have always prompted men in all ages and all countries.

Consider all these things carefully, my dear Wells, and range them under the headings of the two questions which I have proposed above for your solution. Wrap yourself in undisturbed seclusion that you may focus all your percipience upon them. Discard your theories and wrestle with the facts. Take a fortnight to solve these questions before you again bring them before the public. Take a month. Take a year. If necessary, take the remainder of your life.

You may say that it is not necessary for you to study these questions. The cheapjack who sold shilling razors at a country fair, explained to an indignant rustic purchaser that his razors were not meant to shave, but to sell. After that he bolted from the fair. You may reply that your Collectivist State is not meant to work, but to sell to the world public. Before they find out what you have sold them, you will have bolted from the fair. When the revolution that you are invoking actually comes, I cannot imagine, my dear Wells, that you will take

any active leadership or participation in it. Fielding's poet, seeing that fighting had begun in the inn parlour, and that damaged heads and broken noses were indicated, prudently retired to the loft above, and took merely a watching literary interest in the bloody scrimmage below.

To return for a moment to this wicked Mr. Winston Churchill. In the 165 lines that you set apart for dissection of his private and political character, you clearly show that he is a man who needs very close watching. We will let it rest there for the time, and inquire further about him when we make the careful detailed examination of your reply to him that we have promised ourselves. Looped and intertwined with the various charges you make against Mr. Churchill, and equally remote from the questions you make believe to dispute with him, are the 149 lines in your paper which you give to the insinuation, dissemination and promulgation of your own theories. These also will afford us much absorbing matter for consideration.

Indeed the whole paper is so pregnant with suggestion and implication that I begin to ask myself whether its adequate discussion may not take up even more than the two years which was the limit of my original estimate. When I say that your reply to Mr. Churchill is pregnant, I do not mean that it labours to bring forth a shapely body of

living thought, but that it bulges and protuberates with an internal yeasty superfœtation of misbegotten and malformed fallacies and irrelevancies—what the old midwives used to call a false conception. I know that the latest school of gynecologists tell us that there is no such thing as a false conception. I challenge them on the point, and ask them to read your reply to Mr. Churchill.

However, we have settled that we will subject the paper to a searching examination, and find out its exact texture and composition and value. Let us hope that it will not be necessary for us to spend two years in the task. In your "Evening Standard" letter, with something less than your usual extreme delicacy of feeling and expression, you remind me that the years are passing with me. In apportioning their diminished remainder, I find that, great and urgent as your necessities are, I cannot allot more than three years to the business of making a good British citizen of you. If at the end of three years I have not made a good British citizen of you, I shall have to give you up. Since you wish me to study your other works on social philosophy, it is clear that we must economize the time we spend upon your reply to Mr. Churchill. Let us now set about its careful examination, always keeping in mind that our main object is to use it as a gauge of your capacity to "think for half Europe," or for

whatever number of persons there may be in either hemisphere who cannot think for themselves.

Yours hopefully,

HENRY ARTHUR JONES.

January 23, 1921.

LETTER ELEVEN.

THE FOGHORN TUNES UP.

My Dear Wells,—

I am sometimes tempted to envy those writers who, like yourself, have gained a world-wide reputation by thinking for people who cannot think for themselves. Consider how easy your lot is compared with my own. For instance, while writing these letters to you, I am obliged to weigh every sentence, and put it into relation, or at least to take care that it does not conflict with those eternal rules of private conduct, and first principles of social order and government whereby men and nations throughout all the past have guided themselves and established themselves in peace, security and prosperous content. You are under no such obligations. You need only to blaze abroad your "modern ideas," careless as to whether they conform with these immitigable eternal laws; careless as to whether your various utterances are consistent with each other, or with plain facts; careless as to whether your theories can be worked; guided, so far as I can see, by only two firm intelligible principles, those of burning down

employers' shops, and seizing what remains of other people's property.

If you will take the trouble to examine your system of social philosophy, you will find that it is based on these two cardinal principles. You tell us that as a young man, you would have set fire to your employer's shop if you had not been convinced that it was overinsured—perhaps the most charming of all the many pieces of self-revelation you give us in your papers on Russia.

Now my dear Wells, I have not a word to say in the abstract against burning down employers' shops. I am willing to consider it as a practical way of relieving and removing social wrongs. Doubtless a good many employers richly deserve such retribution. I have only one question to ask about burning down employers' shops. Does it—to use the current misleading term—does it "reconstruct" society with advantage to working men? Very obviously it does not. Very obviously it never will. It merely deprives the workers of their means of livelihood until new employers get new capital and build new shops. Then the world wags again, but for a time less comfortably for the workers.

But why not do away with employers altogether? Ah! that's what they said in Russia.

When a man sits down to think for other people I take it the only question he needs ask himself is: "What do they wish to believe?" Great numbers of

our population wish to believe that burning down their employers' shops will "reconstruct" society on a basis more favourable to themselves. Great numbers of our masses have had this doctrine so donged into their ears, and from thence into the vacuities of their cerebrums, that their tongues incessantly clatter it forth as the first axiom of political science.

When I say "burning down employers' shops," I use it as a generic term to cover all those many supplementary devices and dishonesties which, especially since the war, our workers have been encouraged to practise in order to thwart their employers, and thus to diminish the production of those necessaries upon which their own livelihood and comfort depend. Of course if burning down our employers' shops does actually "reconstruct" society, it is clearly a much simpler and easier method than the old-fashioned one of hard work.

Great numbers of our population wish to believe in this new-fashioned way of "reconstructing" society according to "modern ideas." Great numbers of them already do believe in it, and practise it. Therefore the writer who "thinks for" these masses, has only to "think for" them according to their own wishes and notions and beliefs. My dear Wells, how enviable and easy is your lot compared with mine! As we go through your reply to Mr. Churchill, we shall find that the 149 lines in it which are given to the exploitation of your own theories,

are largely informed and coloured by this kind of "thinking."

Further, my dear Wells, in writing these letters to you, I am obliged to take the most scrupulous care not to misrepresent you, or distort facts to suit my whimsies. In these respects, I may modestly claim that I show to some advantage compared with yourself. For whereas I have been sorrowfully compelled to point out to you a large number of your grievous lapses, self-contradictions and inconsistencies, you have so far been able to detect only one trifling displacement of an adjective in the entire course of my letters to you. When I was so negligent as to say that you had called Lenin the "beloved Lenin," while as a matter of fact you had called him "Lenin, beloved," you swooped down upon me, and branded it in the "New York Times" as "Just a lie," and in the "London Evening Standard" as "an out-and-out lie." I was greatly reassured, for you clearly showed me that with this microscopic exception, I had not laid myself open to any impeachment in my conduct of this controversy.

However, you did well to put me on my guard. In future I will take care to put your adjectives on the right side of your nouns. You have given me a warning that it will be dangerous for me to deviate a hair's breadth from the strictest accuracy of quotation and the most searching veracity of comment. When I try to imagine what names you would have

called me, what floods of vituperative wrath you would have poured upon me if I had really misrepresented you, I tremble in my cuticle.

I will be more careful than ever not to mistake or misconstrue your theories. Of course I cannot help seeing their delightful absurdity. You see that yourself. What? You don't? My dear Wells, in a former letter we thoroughly thrashed out that question, and we settled that you *did* see the absurdity of your whole position. I really cannot allow you to reopen the matter. Your absurdity remains the one changeless established immovable fact in a world of ceaseless change and flux and doubt. Believe me, it is the very pivot of your entire system of social and political philosophy.

Having shown you how fettered and restricted I am compared with yourself, inasmuch as I feel bound to consider carefully every statement I make, we may now settle down to the examination of your reply to Mr. Churchill. Draw up your chair to the table, and spread out your copy before you. We may as well make ourselves quite comfortable, as, though our task will, I trust, be both pleasant and profitable to us both, it will necessarily be rather lengthy and complicated.

Of course Archibald Spofforth must needs intrude, and seat himself in the easy armchair by the fireplace with his insufferable air of insolent cynicism and brutal contempt for yourself. He is evidently

determined to spoil our conference if you give him a chance. We won't take any notice of Spofforth. If he interferes or makes any objectionable remarks, I'll find some means of silencing him.

Now if you are quite ready—'Tenshun, my dear Wells.

You call your reply to Mr. Churchill "The Anti-Bolshevik Mind." This title conveys an insinuation that Anti-Bolsheviks are a small narrow unreasonable sect who are blindly and stupidly prejudiced against being robbed and decimated and devastated by such men as Lenin. You begin, *"When first I read our Mr. Churchill's reply . . . I was inclined to leave him unanswered."*

I've just heard Spofforth mutter, "Don't you wish you had!" And perhaps you would have been wise not to attempt any answer. For as you truthfully say, " 'Reply' there was none." Nor as a matter of fact did you make any reply to Mr. Churchill, except in 17 doubtful lines out of 537—*"My poor observations"*—You may well call your observations "poor." Your descriptions of what you actually saw were vivid enough, but your "observations," your remarks and comments upon what you saw—O my dear Wells!

"My poor observations were ignored." Not at all. Bring me any man who can think for himself and who will affirm that within the limits of his one paper Mr. Churchill ignored any of the main ques-

tions at issue. *"Mr. Churchill has not even noted that I do not ascribe the present condition of Russia to the blockade."* Not in so many words. But throughout your five papers you imply that the blockade is a most potent cause of Russia's present desperate condition. Why you even bring your "dunnow-wheere-'e-are" sailorman as evidence to support you.—*"Instead of a reply, there were vehement assertions about Russia and about the world generally,"*—That's what you say. You talk, my dear Wells! You talk! You talk!

Have you ever noticed that you have a habit of making assertions without bringing any jot of evidence in support of them? For instance you say that these open letters of mine to you are "muddled." That doesn't *make* them muddled, does it? You have been able to find only one misplaced adjective in them. How it would please me if I could say that you are a clear, logical, precise, penetrating, candid thinker and social philosopher! It would make my heart leap with joy. Of course I could *say* it. But that wouldn't *make* you one, would it? You would still remain a slave to your theories, and the confused misguided leader of confused misguided folk. For as Doctor Watts profoundly remarks:

> "Let dogs delight to bark and bite
> For God has made them so."

So with yourself. Now your habit of making false suggestions, false assumptions and statements which you cannot prove, is very prevalent throughout this reply of yours to Mr. Churchill. It is a thoroughly bad habit, my dear Wells, especially in a social philosopher of your pretensions. In spite of Doctor Watts' dictum, I will try to cure you of it. I've just heard Spofforth growl under his breath, "You'd much better not waste any more time upon him." I've thrown Spofforth a look of cold disdain that I hope will keep him quiet. I cannot think that Spofforth wishes to see you reclaimed. I believe he is ill-natured enough to hope that you will continue to wander in the mazes of your theories, and perish an unrepentant enemy of your country.

Here it will be convenient to us both, if adopting your own happy description of my office, I take up my duties as foghorn, not forgetting that I am also your flapper—in the Laputan sense.

When you insinuate a false suggestion, I shall give out three "Toots"; gentle toots or tremendous toots, according to the mischievousness and magnitude of your false suggestion. Toot! Toot! Toot! Like that.

When you make an assumption that you do not and cannot prove, and try to impose it upon the credulity of your disciples as verified fact, I shall give out three warning "Booms"; gentle groaning booms, or noisy furious booms, again according to

the mischievousness and magnitude of your false assumption. Boom! Boom! Boom! Like that.

When you make some glib statement upon your own unsupported authority, I shall give out three "Hoots"; gentle subdued hoots, or emphatic terrific hoots, according as your statement is merely doubtful or plainly false. Hoot! Hoot! Hoot! Like that.

When you instil and exploit your own theories as workable, approved and tested principles of government, I shall make the foghorn howl and howl and howl, till it almost cracks itself with wrathful alarm. There will be no gentle howls over your theories, my dear Wells, but only fearful, prolonged, incessant, deep mouthed baying, as from a faithful watchdog who proclaims danger to the household under his charge. Howl-oo-oo-howl—oo-oo-oo-howl-oo-howl—oo-oo-howl-oo-oo-oo-oo-howl—ad lib. Like that.

We have now arranged our code of fog signals, which I hope you understand. You will be able to recognize what kind of mistake you have made, according to the different kind of sound which the foghorn emits. If you are ready, I'll tune up. Toot! Boom! Hoot! Howl! The "damned thing," as you call it, seems to be in good working order. I'll make it speak. I'll make it trumpet far out to sea, and warn the fog-bound, "dunnowheere-'e-are" mariners, "Beware the dreadful suc-

cubus! Beware the quicksands of Internationalism! Beware the maelstrom of Bolshevism!"

Now let us take up the thread of your reply to Mr. Churchill.

"——exactly the assertions that Mr. Churchill, inattentive to any reality, unteachable by any experience," Toot! Toot! Toot! Boom! Boom! Boom! *"has been making for the past two years."* According to you, about two years ago Mr. Churchill suddenly became inattentive to any reality, and unteachable by any experience. Alas, my dear Wells, have you not been the victim of this same malady for much longer than two years, indeed congenitally afflicted with it all your life? *"It is true there was an air of replying"* HOOT! HOOT! HOOT! My dear Wells, Mr. Churchill did reply to you most convincingly. *"Although I am an older man than Mr. Churchill,"*—What has that to do with the matters in dispute? *"—and have spent most of my time watching and thinking about a world—"* With the sorry result that you seem always to think against your own country, and in favour of International chaos. Would not your time have been more usefully spent in your original occupation, quelling your impulse to set your employer's shop on fire, and since you were taking his money for your services, honestly trying to serve him, even if he were a bad employer? There were ameliorations of your lot, such as occasionally serving pretty girls

with ribbons and finery, and other articles of feminine adornment.

"—in a world which he (Mr. Churchill) *has been rushing vehemently from one excitement to another."* Toot! Toot! Toot! Gentle toots, but still unmistakable toots.—*"he has the impudence."* Impudence! You can easily beat him at that. The next time Mr. Churchill shows you any impudence, send him a letter in the tone and style of the letters you write to me.—*"to twit me with superficiality."*— If he only twits you, my dear Wells, I should let him twit. Suppose he begins to study your works as I am doing, how then? Be thankful to anyone who only twits you. Look at Spofforth seated there by the fire, glaring and scowling at you, waiting his chance to make a pounce. Spofforth won't *twit* you. —*"He* (Mr. Churchill) *makes the cheap debating society point against me—"* Would you say that the "points" you are here making against Mr. Churchill are on quite so high a level as that of a cheap debating society? *"—that I have written an outline of the world's history.—"* In this, Mr. Churchill is ill-advised and wrong. He should encourage you to write, not only complete world histories, but complete manuals of controversial etiquette, complete cookery books, complete anything and everything that will keep you off your International whimsies. *"—as though that convicted me of presumption."* Never mind what any of us convict you of, my dear

Wells. You "hit back" by calling us all "silly" and thus draw your readers away from the matter in dispute. *"It is as silly as charging a painter with presumption for sketching a wide landscape instead of painting a bunch of flowers."* You talk! You talk! As the schoolboys say, "On to the ball!" *"From a gentleman who has with unshaken confidence undertaken Admiralty, the guidance of our home affairs, and most other great public concerns, it is ridiculous."* TOOT! TOOT! TOOT! My dear Wells, *you* have managed the affairs of whole continents—on paper. Mr. Churchill has at least had many years of varied experience in the actual responsible government of the people. He must have learned what you seem never even to suspect, that men and women will not change their natural instincts and propensities, remodel their conduct and forsake their own palpable interests in order to establish the theories you have hatched in your head. I do wish you would persuade Lenin to give himself a fortnight's holiday while you take a turn at the practical government of mankind.

"But Mr. Churchill makes his point in entire honesty." I am always uncertain what you mean when you speak of "honesty." There is the new kind of honesty which you and Lenin have invented. In respect of the old and now almost obsolete kind of honesty embodied in the eighth commandment, you seem to me to be standing on

your head. *"He does not think I have any right to a view of the world as a whole."* TOOT! TOOT! TOOT! How can Mr. Churchill stop you from taking a view of the world as a whole? Why not set to work and do so, instead of taking merely distorted topsy-turvy snapshots of it? *"He believes quite naïvely that he belongs to a peculiarly gifted and privileged class of beings."* Toot! and Toot! and Toot! again. How do you know what Mr. Churchill believes about himself? It is plain that you believe "quite naïvely" that you are a "peculiarly gifted" social philosopher. At least that is the attitude you adopt towards Mr. Churchill. I believe that you are—what I am trying to convey in these letters. Now whether you are right or wrong in your estimate of Mr. Churchill, I will not here dispute. But let me tell you, in all gentleness, very sorrowfully but very firmly, that you are quite wrong in your estimate of yourself. *"—beings to whom the lives and affairs of common men are given over, the raw material for brilliant careers."* Toot! Toot! Toot! Why not call him a bloated aristocrat outright? *"It seems to him an act of insolence—"* Toot! Toot! Toot! *"—that a common man like myself—"*

Might you not have left this point in doubt, not classifying yourself quite so definitely, but allowing us some latitude of speculation about it, letting your status as it were ooze out from you? There is some

little savour of brag, my dear Wells, in this unblushing assertion of yourself as a common man. Why not let it be guessed at, suspected, surmised, held in suspense in our minds, and then at the right moment proclaimed by some unmistakable act of yours which could allow us no further doubt as to your class?

But perhaps you wished to mark a contrast between yourself and Mr. Churchill, who you say is not only a reckless, ambitious, vehement politician, but is also guilty of being connected with the peerage. This in itself goes far to prove that he is utterly unfit to hold any place in any government. Indeed it is conclusive evidence not only of political incapacity, but of moral worthlessness, to many of those whom you are "thinking for." And you mustn't lose your hold upon them.

You go on to say that it seems to Mr. Churchill an act of insolence that a common man like yourself *"should form judgements upon matters of statescraft."* TOOT! TOOT! TOOT! HOOT! HOOT! HOOT! So far is Mr. Churchill from thinking it an act of insolence that a common man like you should form judgments upon matters of statescraft, that, in his clearly reasoned paper which you are here professing to answer, he praises the political system under which common men throughout the country have chosen "a lad from a Welsh village to be Prime Minister of Great Britain, and the leading figure in Europe." I really must give

forth another loud and prolonged HOOT! when your giant mind monstrously delivers itself of so palpably false an assertion. There's a gathering look of anger on Spofforth's face. Perhaps you had better move your chair a little farther away from him. One or two more such statements from you, and I may not be able to restrain him from doing you an injury.

"*—should venture to dispute the horrible waste of human life and hope—our lives and hopes and the future of our children.*" TOOT! TOOT! TOOT! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! HOOT! HOOT! HOOT! HOWL-OO-HOWL—OO-HOWL!

I would have thought it impossible to pack into the three sentences which I am analyzing, so much false insinuation, false suggestion, false assumption and false statement as you have contrived to pack into their small space. Let us have another look at these sentences.

You say (false statements) that Mr. Churchill does not think that you have any right to view the world as a whole, and that he considers it an act of insolence for a common man to form judgments upon matters of statescraft. You insinuate that he does this because he is an aristocrat, and is therefore naturally and congenitally incapable of regarding the "lives and affairs of common men" except "as raw material given over to him to make a brilliant career." Here you make the false suggestion that

all aristocrats naïvely regard all common men in this light, and you thereby create a class hatred in the minds of those whom you are "thinking for." You inflame them against all aristocrats, whether individual aristocrats are good or bad citizens, whether or not they are working for the welfare of their country and the interest of all classes.

You go on to make the further and darker false statement that Mr. Churchill thinks it an act of insolence that you should "venture to dispute the horrible waste of human life and hope—our lives and hopes and the future of our children . . ." In these words you make the false suggestion that Mr. Churchill, in contrast to yourself, approves of a "horrible waste of human life and hope," and is actively engaged in sacrificing "our lives and hopes and the future of our children"—suggesting this, and in the same words, suggesting that *you* are beneficently engaged in withstanding him, and that you are protecting "our lives and hopes and the future of our children" from his baleful practices against them.

Further, my dear Wells, in the same few short words, you make the monstrous assumption that "our lives and hopes and the future of our children" are to be saved from Mr. Churchill's malignant activities by the promulgation of your International and Collectivist theories. For I know not that you have taken any other, any active practical means to

save "our lives and hopes and the future of our children," beyond writing papers backing up Lenin, and inciting your fellow citizens towards revolution and the establishment of an International government. You do not give us the least hint by what conceivable process the copious publication of your theories will save "our lives and hopes and the future of our children." Are you taking any other, any practical steps to rescue "our lives and hopes and the future of our children?" If you are not taking such steps, why do you most irrelevantly, with sublimest audacity of self-delusion, with blindest disregard of facts, with no care except for a shout of applause from the crowded gallery of your unthinking disciples,—why in the name of all that is honest in controversy, do you pose as the saviour of human lives and hopes and the future of our children?

Before we accept you as a saviour of human hopes and lives and the future of children in any part of the world, we will ask what are your feelings toward the men who have caused the enormous waste of human lives and hopes in Russia, who have sentenced millions of helpless babes to hunger, marasmus, idiocy, disease and untimely death, by governing Russia on what you carefully explain to us are false and unworkable Marxian theories. Oh but you say, these millions of lives were sacrificed in the sacred cause of Internationalism. It is true you tell us that

they were sacrificed to a false and vicious theory, but what does that matter? It was an International theory. Therefore these millions of lives don't count as waste with you. You counsel us to make haste and save our own lives and hopes and the future of our children by supporting Bolshevism, and at the same time starting to govern our own country on some other International theory which you have hatched in your head, and which you assume will work, without giving us the least shadow of proof that it will not sacrifice as many lives and hopes, and destroy as many babes as Bolshevism itself.

So you abuse the men who are governing your own country, and you embrace the man whom you have called a rotten little incessant egotistical intriguer deserving to be killed by some moral sanitary authority—you embrace this man who has been largely responsible for this multitudinous murder and waste of human lives and hopes, you palliate his crimes, you extol his "creative effort," you counsel the Americans to support him in governing Russia by his vicious unworkable principles. And to multiply and crown your absurdities you pose as a saviour of human lives and hopes and the future of our children. TOOT! BOOM! HOOT! HOWL! Cease not, O foghorn, to send your warning message as far as there are men's ears to receive it.

I have examined at great length these three sen-

tences in your reply to Mr. Churchill. I have shown what they really amount to, what they signify to men who *can* think for themselves. Upon the minds of those who *cannot* think for themselves, who allow you to do their thinking for them, who take whatever you write at its spurious face value, you have left the impression that you are not only a profound social philosopher with a sovereign panacea for the miseries and disorders of the world, but that you are also a beneficent philanthropist, protecting our lives and hopes and the future of our children from a body of wicked aristocrats who are bent upon destroying them. You have thus gained great personal prestige, and you have fomented that unreasoning class hatred which if it gains its ends will bring untold misery to all classes, but chiefly to the poorer classes. So it has been in Russia. For it is always upon the poorer classes, the working classes, that national mistakes are most heavily visited. You don't think that class hatred is a national mistake? Think again, and think a little more carefully.

Just one more point, to finish off the sentence. You accuse Mr. Churchill of a *"frantic anti-Russian policy."* Hoot! Hoot! Hoot! Mr. Churchill's policy is not anti-Russian. It is anti-Bolshevist, anti-Internationalist, pro-British. Your own policy is anti-British, pro-Bolshevist, pro-Internationalist. Yet here you imply that you are pro-Russian, in opposition to Mr. Churchill, who you say is anti-Russian.

How is it that Pacifists and Internationalists are always fervent Patriots in respect of other countries, and fervent Internationalists in respect of their own country? Find me an answer to this riddle.

Adhesively yours,

HENRY ARTHUR JONES.

New York,
6 February, 1921.

LETTER TWELVE.

THE FLAPPER FLAPS AND THE FOGHORN HOWLS.

My Dear Wells,—

In my last letter I dissected 63 of the 537 lines which your reply to Mr. Churchill contains. In these first 63 lines there is not one word of argument. You have carefully shunned the four questions which I showed in my ninth letter (page 103) were the matters of dispute between you and him. You have merely made an attack on Mr. Churchill's private and political motives and character, and presented him in violent contrast to yourself. By adopting these tactics, you have established yourself, in the minds of all readers who cannot think for themselves, as a profound social and political philosopher, a lofty disinterested philanthropist who is offering a free admission to an International paradise to them and to millions of their dear sweet little unborn babes. In the same unthinking minds, you have established Mr. Churchill as a reckless, wicked, bloodthirsty aristocrat, consumed with a lust to "waste human lives and hopes," and waiting like the great red

dragon in Revelations to devour unborn babes—an unscrupulous member of a privileged class of beings against whom you, a common man, appeal to the other common men of the kingdom, not to let him waste their lives and hopes and devour their unborn babes. And the common men of the kingdom, not wishing to have their lives and hopes wasted and their unborn babes devoured by Mr. Churchill, vote for your attractive alternative of an International Collectivist paradise which will open to them of its own accord if they will simply embrace your theories.

Such are the results of our analysis of the first 63 lines of your reply. There remain 474 lines for us yet to examine. My dear Wells, I hope I have convinced you that I do not intend to shirk my duty to you. But the last three sentences which we have examined have taken up an inordinate amount of our available time. Suppose that I had resolved to subject all the sentences in your five papers on Russia to the same minute and searching analysis indeed which they invited. By this time we should scarcely have got to the end of the first paper. From this you will be able to estimate how lightly and leniently I have dealt with you.

Not that I shrink from the full examination of these 474 remaining lines. A mere glance through them shows that they will amply repay all the loving care and attention that we may bestow them. But there are other considerations. You complain that

I have not read your other writings. I am eager to examine them. I am told that in "God the Everlasting King" you have said some very remarkable things about religion. Of course Spofforth must needs ejaculate a jeering laugh. He has read it, and he says it is "bunk." Since Norfolk has been in the United States, he admits some very questionable words into his vocabulary. Granted that "God the Everlasting King" is "bunk," Spofforth needn't have said so in that offensive monosyllable. He might have put it in a kinder, politer way. I shall read it myself, and if I find that it is not "bunk," I shall handle Spofforth very severely.

Then Mr. Hilaire Belloc says your "Outline of History" is—well, he doesn't say that it is "bunk." Perhaps he hasn't heard the word, and perhaps he wouldn't use it if he had. But Belloc does say that a large part of your "Outline of History" is bad history, and quite untrustworthy in many of its facts and conclusions. I suppose that, as in social philosophy, when a common man like yourself sets out to write history for common people, his business is to ask himself what they would like to believe, and then to write his history accordingly. This is what Belloc says you have done. He seems to think history ought to be written in some other way, and this prejudices him against your book. I have an uneasy feeling that I ought to look at your "Outline of History"—not to read it thoroughly, but just to

skim off any fallacies that may be floating on the surface.

There is another consideration. Not only do my obligations to you increase with respect to what you have written in the past, but I may be incurring fresh obligations with respect to what you are writing now, and may write in the future. How do I know in what fresh direction you may go woolgathering? At any moment you may offer me such a tempting fresh exhibition of "modern ideas" for my examination that I shall not be able to resist their instant discussion with you. I must have a margin of time to meet such a contingency. I repeat that in view of other responsibilities, three years is the longest period that I can set apart to cure you of your International whimsies and to make a good loyal British citizen of you. To do this thoroughly, it is not enough to teach you that burning down employers' shops, stealing silver teapots, "collecting" other people's property, and fraternizing with the avowed enemies of your country with the object of provoking a social revolution—it is not enough to teach you that these activities cannot form the basis of any social order, but can only lead towards universal misery, starvation and anarchy. When I have taught you this lesson—a very hard one, I admit, for you to learn—I shall also have to show you that social order of any kind in any state depends almost entirely upon a general obedience of all classes to

certain ancient changeless rules of private conduct, and to certain ancient eternal first principles of government. Considering the opposition in your mind to these ancient rules and principles, I fear a great portion of our three years is already mortgaged. We shall have to economize the precious moments we spend over your reply to Mr. Winston Churchill, alluring as the subject is. Before we resume our inquiry, let us call to mind that its main object is to ascertain your capacity to "think for" other people, and the quality of the thought that you are "thinking" for them.

'Tenshun, my dear Wells! The foghorn is in good working order, and my flapper's rod with its bladder attached is by my side. You have kept me so busy with the foghorn, that I have scarcely had a chance to serve you as flapper—in the Laputan sense. I take up my instrument of office, swing it over my shoulder, and prepare to give you a resounding slap with the bladder. For, my dear Wells, all through this reply to Mr. Churchill, you are so oblivious of the matters you are discussing with him, so intent upon proving him to be a villain, and upon pushing your own theories, that I must try to wake you up to the realities of your situation.

Please to turn back to Letter Nine, page 103. I have there plainly set down the groups of questions which form the subject matter of your debate with Mr. Churchill. Please to read them over carefully.

I take my aim—Pop! That was a good stroke, wasn't it? Did you feel it? Has it roused you? Has it purged your vision and shown you what you are arguing about?

My dear Wells, except in two short passages amounting to 17 lines, you never approach these vital questions which you are pretending to discuss, which alone are worth serious discussion, and which so urgently demand our most searching inquiry.

If to save time, I spare you a minute examination of the remaining 474 lines, will you take my word that they contain as great a proportion of irrelevancies, misrepresentations, fallacies, false insinuations, false suggestions, unproved and false assertions, and outrageous assumptions as the 63 lines which I have already examined? Or will you insist that I shall dissect every remaining sentence with the same diligent care that I have given to the last three sentences? It is for you to say. Let me hear from you on this point.

Meantime I proceed to review the most flagrant and salient delinquencies in the succeeding 474 lines. For 21 lines you continue to abuse Mr. Churchill, in a succession of mixed metaphors. He is a *"running sore of waste"*; he has *"smeared his vision with human blood"* (what a shocking contrast to "Lenin, beloved"!). At the same time his *"display of vision,"* whatever that may mean, is *"merely comic."* He seems to be performing some wonderful optical

feats. While smearing his vision with human blood, and doing other queer things with his eyes, he "poses as a statesman."

"He does not stand alone." This is rather cryptic, and to me very suspicious. Evidently it is all part of his wicked design to waste human lives and hopes. You may well, in the next line, describe his vision as *"grotesque and distorted,"* but you get cryptic again when you go on to say that this vision *"is no more and no less contemptible than some misshapen idol—"* I cannot follow the equation, but the phrase would make a splendid caption in a film play.

My dear Wells, I could feast for a week on this metaphor pie of yours if we had the time.

It seems that this misshapen idol is esteemed by some tribe or other "to which we may presently see our children sacrificed." Now I get you! You want to raise a bogey, and frighten the common people that Mr. Churchill is setting on some savage tribe to devour their unborn babes! Cease! Cease! Our unborn babes may indeed be sacrificed if your International theories prevail. Turn again to Russia, and count the millions of babes that have been sacrificed to a false International theory.

In the 41 following lines, you summarize in a perverse heavy satirical way, Mr. Churchill's rapid survey of European civilization before 1914. It may have been a bad world to live in during those

years, but, my dear Wells, compare it with the state of Russia under International government as described in your first two papers! You may claim that these 41 lines have some remote connection with the questions you are disputing with Mr. Churchill. I shall say that they contain no word of argument on the matters in debate. They draw your readers away from them. So I pick up my flapper's rod, and I take my aim. Pop! Right on the spot again! Attend, my dear Wells, to the serious business before us.

After 15 lines sympathetically and perversely describing the advent of the Bolsheviks to power, you suddenly illuminate the whole situation by saying that the Bolsheviks *"at once set about killing people."* You add, however, *"with a freedom that had hitherto been reserved for their betters."* TOOT! TOOT! TOOT! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! HOOT! HOOT! HOOT! It is a venomous insinuation of class hatred. In all ranks, in all armies, officers and men have been sacrificed and have sacrificed themselves, not because they wanted to kill, but because they had to defend their country, or perish with their country. In England we would not recruit the hundreds of thousands that Lord Roberts implored us to recruit. We had to recruit eight millions.

When you further make a sneering allusion to those who died at Gallipoli, a mere handful compared with the myriads who, directly or indirectly,

have perished or shall perish from Bolshevik misrule, I strike you with the rod of contempt of all who can think and judge for themselves, and I set hooting and howling at you all the warning voices that can save infatuated men from pursuing a delusion to their own destruction. Gallipoli was a terrible mistake. So was Balaclava. All wars are full of terrible mistakes. You condemn Gallipoli. Naturally. It was fought for the defence of your country. That makes it a crime in your eyes. You palliate and excuse the massacres in Russia. Naturally. They were committed in furtherance of an International Scheme. That justifies them in your eyes, and makes them a virtuous necessity.

Let me show you the difference in the quality of these two sacrifices of human life. Gallipoli was the largely voluntary offering of her sons by a loyal colony to the mother country, and declared the affection of that colony to the British Empire, its pride in being a part of it. Gallipoli was fought by men in arms against armed enemies, according to the rules of civilized warfare, with the understanding, consent and enthusiastic devotion of its victims to a cause for which they willingly laid down their lives. The Russian massacres were mere butchery and murder of helpless innocent folk, many of them women and children, driven to brutal indiscriminate slaughter. They had no arms; they had no means of defence; there was no pretence of trial. They

were simply put to agonizing torture and death by their own countrymen in defiance of all law and all humanity.

Now let me show you the difference in the results of Gallipoli and the Russian massacres. Gallipoli, terrible as was its sacrifice of brave lives, did in some measure contribute to the final victory, and by that victory, you, my dear Wells, as we must never forget, are now in the peaceful possession of your motor car and your cosy dividends—until such times as your own International theories are put into practice. By the Russian massacres, and their kindred tyrannies, your Russian brother novelists and writers are in the pitiable condition you describe in your second paper, with no motor cars, no cosy dividends, with scarcely food to eat, with scarcely decent clothes to cover them. While the Russian workers are the dumb driven slaves of bloody exploiters who shoot them down if they attempt to strike. Yet you wholly condemn Gallipoli, and you complacently condone the Russian massacres. O blasphemy of sacred, heaven-sent common sense!! BOOM! HOOT! HOWL!

I keep my hand upon the open valve of the foghorn, and let the "damned thing," as you call it, blare out its ceaseless warnings through the thick fog of a succeeding column or two of your fallacies, assumptions, personal aspersions, inconsistencies and

self-contradictions. If I try to pick out the most glaring of them, almost every sentence leaps out at me and demands precedence of examination. However I will choose one or two examples.

Before I select them, I will take you back to the end of your fifth paper on Russia where you summarize the Bolshevik situation. You tell us there that we must intervene on a grand scale with the vast resources of Western civilization, that the American government must undertake the gigantic task of becoming the supporter, the right hand and consultant of the Russian government—that is to say, America must virtually assume the dictatorship of Russia. You threaten us that unless we make these colossal, costly, risky experiments, there will be a final collapse of civilization in Russia, that this collapse will spread eastward and westward, and that possibly *"all modern civilization may tumble in."* That is your conclusion. Your formula stated in the shortest terms is this: "Bolshevism is a tremendous, world-threatening thing. We must deal with it, or it will overwhelm civilization."

If you read Mr. Churchill's paper, you will find that his formula stated in its shortest terms, is exactly the same as your own: "Bolshevism is a tremendous, world-threatening thing. We must deal with it or it will overwhelm civilization." The difference between you and Mr. Churchill is in your

proposed methods of dealing with Bolshevism. Mr. Churchill says: "We must root it out and crush it." You say: "We must nurse it, support it, and subsidize it with enormous capital and resources." Clearly in your reply to Mr. Churchill, you must address yourself to this one point upon which you are at variance from him, for on the other two points, you are in agreement with him. You see that, don't you?

Now what do you do? From the start, you involve and entangle the discussion in irrelevancies; you constantly abuse Mr. Churchill; you instil and insinuate your own theories; you carefully avoid argument upon this main matter upon which you differ from Mr. Churchill, and at great length and throughout the paper you try to prove that he is wrong upon the matter wherein you agree with him, namely that Bolshevism is a tremendous, world-threatening thing. In your papers on Russia you describe its horrors and terrors, and you make us shudder, and you sum up by warning us that "all civilization may tumble in." In your reply to Mr. Churchill, you seek to prove that Bolshevism is a comparatively trifling, amiable, negligible thing. Let me give you a few quotations. Don't fidget, my dear Wells. There's a dangerous scowl on Spofforth's face, and a dangerous look in his eye. Don't irritate him beyond his endurance.

'Tenshun, my dear Wells! Read your own

words. *"Why is Mr. Churchill making this tremendous fuss about Bolshevism?" You* ask that?! You take away my breath.

"I have tried to draw the Bolsheviks as tney are, creatures like ourselves, each one both bad and good . . . Mrs. Sheridan's diary confirms that story of entirely human beings up to the hilt." We are not concerned here with their private habits and relations. We all know that when the enterprising burglar is not a-burgling, he loves to lie a-basking in the sun, and listen to the brooks a-gurgling. That he adores the beauties of nature and is kind to his mother, is not to the point. We are dealing with him as the man who has broken into our house and stolen our best silver teapot. Mr. Churchill, you tell us, is a bright and vivid painter in oils. Why not judge him from that point of view, and make this pleasing accomplishment of his the keynote of his character? Why represent him to us as a great red dragon with an abnormal appetite for unborn babes, and an atrocious habit of smearing his vision with human blood, and in this blinking state posing as a statesman? Since you would have us judge the Bolshevist leaders by their private tastes and habits, why not extend the same courteous treatment to Mr. Churchill, and judge him by some amiable trait in his private character?

Having lightly sketched the Bolshevist leaders for us as ordinary, harmless human beings like our-

selves, you say, *"But Mr. Churchill will not have that truth."* It is not a truth, my dear Wells. It is a glaring transparent fallacy, the fallacy of asking us to judge men in their private relations, when we are solely concerned with their public capacities and actions. These are the men who have tortured and shot down without trial countless thousands of their helpless innocent countrymen. That is the indictment on which we are trying them.

"He exalts the Bolsheviks. He makes much of them. He magnifies them to terrific proportions, . . . makes them the leading fact in the whole world." Well, what have you done? You warn us that if we don't deal with them "all modern civilization may tumble in." Isn't that making them "the leading fact in the world"? You go on to speak of Bolshevism as *"this small movement . . . which happens to be in control of Russia today."* When your purpose is to discredit Mr. Churchill, you represent Bolshevism as a temporary, negligible phenomenon, which he is trying to magnify out of all proportion. When your purpose was to frighten us into recognizing and supporting Bolshevism, you represented it as a formidable firmly-established, world-invading force.

You tell us that Mr. Churchill is too intelligent to believe that *"this small movement . . . can really capture and dominate the world."* But my dear Wells, you have demonstrated to us that it has

already so far captured and dominated the world that it threatens the wreck of modern civilization, unless we extend a cordial helping hand to its crazy bankrupt government. HOOT! HOOT! HOOT!

Do you recognize, my dear Wells, that in the passages I have quoted, and in kindred passages scattered through your reply where you claim that Bolshevism is a small insignificant movement, scarcely worthy our troubling about in a world where your vast vague modern ideas are alone worthy of consideration—do you recognize that, in all these passages, you are seeking to establish that Mr. Churchill is perniciously mistaken in a matter upon which you are in absolute agreement with him—namely that Bolshevism is a tremendous world-threatening force?

I do wish you would not contradict yourself upon the most important matters of fact. I cannot but think that this habit of yours, like your other habit of making the wildest assertions without the least foundation, is a very bad habit indeed in a social philosopher of your eminence. It grieves and hurts me more than I can say. Can't you manage to break yourself of it? Of course you may plead that you felt yourself unable to tackle Mr. Churchill on the matter in which you were at variance from him, namely this—that Bolshevism being this world-threatening force, is it to be rooted out and crushed, or is it to be petted and cherished and supplied with

capital? You may plead that being unable to meet Mr. Churchill's arguments on this ground, you had to prove to those whom you are "thinking for," that he was wrong about something. Even then I do not think I should have elected to prove that he was wrong in a matter upon which you entirely agree with him.

Why not expose him as a bad painter in oils? Your disciples probably know as little about art as they know about logic. I haven't seen Mr. Churchill's pictures, but I think it possible you might have made out a damning case against him as an artist. However, your object was to prove him wrong about something or about anything, in order to discredit him with your disciples. And your disciples not demanding any better proof than your bare assertions, not comparing and not remembering, any more than yourself, what you say from week to week, accept your statements and retain only a general impression that Mr. Churchill is wrong about Bolshevism, and that therefore you must be right. If that is your explanation of why you denounce and attack Mr. Churchill on a matter in which you are in absolute agreement with him, I accept it most cordially. There is no other conceivable explanation.

And now having glanced at one or two of the fallacies and contradictions which multiply themselves in the 165 lines of your paper which you give

to the detraction of Mr. Churchill, we may allow ourselves a little time to breathe before we pass to a brief examination of the 149 lines given over to the advancement of your own theories.

I ask you to notice that we have not yet discovered a single word of argument on your part touching the four questions which cover the serious matters in dispute between you and Mr. Churchill. (See Letter Nine, page 103.) The funds of our Fabian beanfeast are sadly in need of replenishment, if we are to have that rollicking day at Hampton Court and Windsor which we have promised ourselves. I am getting anxious. I beg you to attend to your duties as treasurer of our beanfeast. Whatever may be the results of this controversy, at least let us get one day of sheer careless healthy breezy enjoyment out of it. You have disappointed me in so many things, my dear Wells. Don't disappoint me in this. You accuse me of trading on your "careless hospitalities." Let me amply repay you.

Yours bounteously,

HENRY ARTHUR JONES.

New York,
February 11, 1921.

LETTER THIRTEEN.

THE TORTOISE AND THE ELEPHANT.

My Dear Wells,—

I think we may congratulate ourselves upon the progress we are making through the morass—if I may swell into metaphor over this wonderful reply of yours to Mr. Churchill. You will take it as a tribute to yourself if I mix my metaphors, and say that the foghorn is working admirably under the severe strain to which it has been put. You will notice that I am obliged to keep the "damned thing," as you call it, incessantly tooting and booming and hooting and howling.

I fear that as we examine your theories, I shall be also called upon to render you frequent services as your flapper—in the Laputan sense. I will therefore keep my flapper's rod and bladder in readiness at my elbow. Just to arouse your attention, I will give you a preliminary tap. Pop! What a marksman I am!

Now about these theories of yours. Spofforth seems to be less actively malignant and has dropped

back in his chair. I suspect that this is a ruse. We will credit Spofforth with constant vigilance.

'Tenshun to these theories of yours. Subject to your correction, I claim that you instil and exploit them in 149 lines, as against 17 lines that you set apart for argument with Mr. Churchill.

You will remember that at some period of the world's history, a philosopher whose grasp of cosmic laws and principles was scarcely less comprehensive than your own, evolved the theory that the world rested upon the back of an elephant, whose feet were firmly planted upon the back of a tortoise. By this arrangement our planet was kept in a steady poise, and mundane affairs proceeded in a stable working equilibrium. In those days, as in our own, the great majority of the people found it too great an exertion to think for themselves, and so allowed other people to think for them. The theory of the elephant and the tortoise seemed to offer a simple and reasonable explanation of the universe as they saw it. They therefore accepted it without further inquiry as to what supported the tortoise. The tortoise remained as the ultimate foundation of all things, firmly squatting upon nothingness in the void.

I wish to point out to you, my dear Wells, the striking resemblance that your own general social and political theory has to that of the ancient philosopher. In its main conception, it has the same

massive simplicity. It renders an easy, intelligible explanation of the concatenation of things. It is equally satisfying and convincing to people who cannot think for themselves. Indeed, all these worlds of "modern ideas," yours, Lenin's, and the dozen other paradises of Socialistic and International felicity, are built upon the self-same simple plan of the tortoise, the elephant, and the vast superincumbent Paradise on the top.

I have but one question to ask about any theory—will it work in the actual world in which we live? I read in this morning's New York paper, that the Socialist legislators of North Dakota have, like Lenin, brought their state to bankruptcy, and like Lenin, are obliged to apply to the hated Capitalist to get them out of the mess. Strange that every attempt to establish Socialism, whether in small communities of a few families, or in a state of the size of Dakota, or in one of vast continental proportions like Russia —strange that they all end in bankruptcy, misery and confusion, while the community gradually returns to security and prosperity according as the modes and codes of ordinary commercial intercourse are again brought into operation. How do you account for this?

Let us take a look at the general plan on which all these Socialist Paradises are constructed in the minds of their designers. You have exposed the crudely false Marxian foundations upon which Lenin

tried to get his Paradise to work. But, my dear Wells, you are seeking to build your Collectivist Paradise upon the same simple vicious formula.

First of all you posit your tortoise—a body of Collectivist principles and doctrines. You do not posit it on the bedrock of human nature, which you may be sure will in the future act in the mass, from the same general motives and instincts that have guided human conduct and actions in all the past. You posit your tortoise in an aery void in your "world of modern ideas." However, the tortoise is an amiable placid beast, who lies quiet and acquiescent, while you plant upon his thick impenetrable shell an elephant of enormous bulk and proportions. The elephant, as you readily discern, is your vast new bureaucracy, an enormous and ever-increasing number of officials, whose business it will be to look after other people's business, and to administer your new departments and new institutions according to Collectivist principles and laws, irrespective of whether the mass of the population will be obliging enough to change their instincts and motives and conform to your ordinances. This is a matter that does not trouble you in the least, for you complacently proceed to put your new and regenerated world on the top of the elephant's back.

You will perceive, my dear Wells, that the success of your scheme depends upon the behaviour of the elephant. You assume that the elephant is going to

do what you wish him to do, stand patiently there without wriggling, and bear your new world upon his broad back while its inhabitants dance round it in pure unclouded Collectivist content and felicity.

It all depends upon the elephant. But the elephant cannot be depended upon. Docile as he generally is, he has his seasons of "must" and friskiness when even his keeper dares not go near him. And to suppose that just to oblige you he is going to stand there immovably and never so much as wriggle, or jolt, or caper about—My dear Wells, O my dear Wells! Do study the elephant's habits and nature, do study the habits and nature of bureaucracy, before you put your new world upon your elephant's back. Lenin's Marxian elephant has kicked his Paradise to pieces. Why should you think that your Collectivist elephant will be any more tractable?

Once more to our examination of these 149 lines in your reply to Mr. Churchill, where you insinuate and exploit these theories of yours. Just to keep us en rapport with each other, I will give you a swingeing smack with my flapper's rod and bladder, intimating that it is necessary I should have your undivided attention. POP! Rather a staggering reminder, eh? But my dear Wells, you are so steeped and lost in your theories that a hard tap was necessary. Trust me, I won't use any more violence with you than is necessary to wake you up to actualities.

You reproach and abuse Mr. Churchill through-

out your letter for being concerned with Bolshevism, instead of being concerned with the advancement of your Collectivist theories and schemes. In total oblivion of the fact that your have described Bolshevism as a terror that threatens to overwhelm civilization, you now treat it as something quite negligible and harmless. All that we have to do is to allow it to subside, and to be absorbed in that general beneficent Collectivist movement of all mankind which you are directing from your study.

Now the first thing that I would have you notice about your theories and schemes is that they are very vast and very vague. You condemn our present civilization as being no civilization at all. *"For were it so, it would surely have inherent in it a wider and finer future."* How do you know that it hasn't a wider and finer future? Always remember, my dear Wells, that this deplorable present civilization does provide you with a motor car and cosy dividends. You will be lucky if you get these advantages in your Collectivist State. In your opinion our present civilization has not inherent in it some general blessed condition of humanity which you call a "wider and finer future." You would replace it by Collectivism, about which we must take your word, that it will give us this general blessed condition of humanity which you do not more definitely describe to us than that it will be "a wider and finer future." I daresay you could give, I daresay you have given,

as circumstantial a picture of the glories of this "wider and finer future" as a Salvation Army captain could give us of the glories of the New Jerusalem—and as convincing.

You proceed to say that if our present civilization were worth preserving, *"it would involve developing forces of education"*—(A terribly nebulous phrase)—Here your argument is that because in your opinion our present civilization does not "involve" this very obscure process, it must be destroyed and replaced by Collectivism. My dear Wells, I suppose that in your giant mind you do attach some meaning to words. In merciful consideration for our bewilderment, I beg you to tell us exactly what you mean by "involve developing forces of education." You must have formed some more or less definite conception of this process in prospective working, related, as it inevitably must be, to all other social and industrial activities, and administered, as it must be, by a vast army of officials.

We must have some better warrant for destroying our present social order than your vague accusation that it doesn't "involve developing forces of education." Already, my dear Wells, we are "developing forces of education" in Whitehall that threaten to cost us a hundred millions a year, with the result that our working class girls are asked questions about Miss Marie Corelli, and that the 85 per cent of our population who have to get their

living by manual labour are being educated away from it, and increasingly hate and avoid it. God forbid that we should develop any more "forces of education" to work towards these ends.

At the end of your sentence you climb to yet dizzier heights of vasty vagueness. You level the further terrible accusation against the civilization that provides you with a motor car and cosy dividends, that it does not *"involve developing . . . a power of resistance against error and passion."* BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! HOWL! HOWL! HOWL!

I doat to ecstasy upon this last phrase. It is worthy of the great phrase-monger himself. You have lately been studying the various successive civilizations. Have any of these civilizations "developed a power of resistance to error and passion"? If so, which of them? Against what human errors and passions? And to what an extent? How do you gauge this power of resistance in any particular civilization? Are you quite sure that, when you have overturned our present civilization, your Collectivist civilization will develop this very abstract, very intangible "power of resistance to error and passion" in any greater degree than our present civilization, or than the civilizations that have perished?

All these questions you should have asked yourself and answered, before reproaching and abusing Mr.

Churchill because he upholds a form of civilization which, whatever its defects, has at least the very definite, very concrete, very substantial, and precisely appraisable merit of providing you, as I think I have said before, with a motor car and cosy dividends.

Remember, O remember, my dear Wells, that your Collectivist State will have to be administered, not in your study, but in the world at large by actual men and women, who will be cussedly liable to error and passion—administered by them for their fellow men and women who will also be cussedly liable to error and passion. Perhaps you haven't estimated this liability to error and passion in men and women. At any rate you seem to have planned your Collectivist State on the assumption that its happy populace will not only be free from error and passion, but also from the base and vicious habit of looking after their own individual interests.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

I take a moment's pause to bid you observe that I am not here concerned to defend our present civilization. My primary object for the time being, is to examine the quality and consistency of your thinking, and to measure your capacity to "think for" other people on the gravest questions—in short I repeat I am constructing a Wellsometer.

In the same strain, with the same sublime vasty vagueness, you go on to deny that our present social

order is a civilization at all, or it would be capable of *"sane adjustments against war and a proper economy of its resources and energy."* Toot! Toot! Toot! Tout à fait all Toot! And Boom! Boom! Boom! Here you are in the same misty region of abstractions and imponderable generalities, vending pills to cure earthquakes. You talk, my dear Wells, you talk, you talk! As the Americans say, "Come down to brass tacks."

I have analyzed but one passage out of the many in which you push your Collectivist theories, ideals, and plans. At your request, and for your further enlightenment I am ready to analyze all the other similar passages. But I think I have amply shown that you are wandering among vast and vague abstractions which you would find it impossible to bring into any practical connection with actualities, and with the masses of mankind as we know them.

Let me note that all this time we have not discovered one line of argument upon the matters that you are pretending to discuss with Mr. Churchill.

The second thing that I wish you to notice about your theories and schemes, is that, granted they are feasible, they will be terribly expensive—so expensive that they will infallibly ruin any community that attempts to put them into practice. As I do not believe that your schemes are workable, I needn't trouble myself about the expense of working them. But if, after the publication of these letters, you

still intend to advocate the establishment of a Collectivist State, I think you should draw out some sort of a balance sheet of its probable assets on the one side, and its actual working expenses and liabilities on the other side.

I beseech you to go very carefully into this matter of Collectivist finance, my dear Wells. I foresee very great difficulties ahead of you. All the more, as I suppose that whatever commercial transactions and intercourse are permitted in your Collectivist State, will be regulated by the new kind of honesty which you and Lenin have invented, and not by the old kind of honesty as set forth in the eighth commandment. I tell you frankly, my dear Wells, I have very grave doubts about this new kind of honesty. However, it seems to be gaining general acceptance as the honesty of the future. For myself, I much prefer the old kind.

Now it seems to me that the practice of this new kind of honesty in your Collectivist State, will be a terrible burden and embarrassment to its finances. I do not envy your Chancellor of the Exchequer. If I were you, I would not say one further word in favour of the establishment of Collectivism, till I had carefully worked out a scheme of finance suitable to the requirements of your future State. Take care you manage to leave a balance on the right side. Consider how annoying it will be to you if, just at the moment you have got things nicely started, you

find yourself obliged, like Lenin, and like the Socialists of North Dakota, to apply to some body of hated Capitalists to come with a little ready cash and help you out of the mess. No, no, my dear Wells, you mustn't risk a fiasco of that kind. It must be the crowning glory of your career to establish a Collectivist State on a sound financial basis.

I know there are enormous difficulties. It isn't merely that men are liable to "error and passion" and will follow their own selfish interests. There are the women. For instance, when Comrade Bela Kun was governing in Buda-Pesth, Mrs. Bela Kun went to Vienna and bought all the latest Parisian evening dresses, paying enormous sums—eighty pounds for one hat. I hear a similar story about the wife of a leading German Socialist. I dare say that you know wives of English Socialists and Collectivists who are so actively opposed to their husbands' pet theories and principles that they take every opportunity of dressing much better than their neighbours. Even if we get all the men to fall in with our Collectivist plans, how shall we abolish all this rivalry of extravagance in the women? How shall we get all the pretty women to renounce the additional charms which the latest most expensive fashions may give them, and how shall we get all the plain women to rest content, without trying to cover and obliterate their plainness under factitious costly adornment?

This is a most serious question, my dear Wells. I hope you will be able to find a solution. We can't have our youngling Collectivist Commonwealth pervaded by Mrs. Bela Kuns, can we? How are you going to prevent it?

In this marvellous reply of yours to Mr. Churchill, you advocate radical universal changes which, if carried out, will dislocate the world's present fiscal system, and from the outset will demand a colossal expenditure by your Collectivist officials. Where's the money to come from, my dear Wells? Not only is your giant mind clouded with a vasty vagueness as to how your theories are to be worked by actual men and women, but it is steeped in a yet denser and vastier vagueness as to how they are to be paid for.

Come now, sit down with a sufficient supply of pens, ink and paper and make out the first year's budget of your Collectivist Commonwealth. Put all your expenses on one side. Don't forget any of the items. On the other side, set down all your assets. By the way, what are your assets? From what sources, out of whose pockets do they come? Well, whatever your assets may be, set them down in a nice clear clerkly hand, and then strike the balance. It would be a thousand pities if our hopeful Collectivist State collapsed at the start, and all for want of a little ready cash.

What? You don't propose to start business on a cash basis? You propose to open this universal

Collectivist shop and supply everybody with everything they need, on the sole security that mankind generally are going to forsake their own palpable individual interests, and do all that your vasty vagueness has mapped out for them to do? My dear Wells, you'll shut up your Collectivist shop within a week. A week? I'll bet you a complete set of all your writings on Social Philosophy to a threepenny bit, that you'll never get open at all.

You have planted your tortoise in the void, and your elephant will kick your Collectivist Paradise to bits, the moment you put it upon his back. It is all in the void, my dear Wells. It is all on paper. It is something that has got into your head, and all the time Nature has got something quite different in her head. Don't you catch her smile of grave contempt, as she watches you hatching these vasty vague theories of yours, and saddling your new world on to your elephant's back? Let us have some further talk about these theories in my next letter. With incessant care for you,

HENRY ARTHUR JONES.

P. S.—Have you read that little pamphlet I sent you, "The Folly of Having Opinions"?

New York,
February 18, 1921.

LETTER FOURTEEN.

FALLACIES GALORE.

My Dear Wells,—

The more I study this reply of yours to Mr. Churchill, the more I am fascinated and absorbed by it. It is so nebulous in phrase, so opulent in fallacy, so triumphant in assumption, so brazen in self-contradiction, so cocksure in wild unproved assertion. Bear with me while I analyze a few more of its sentences, if not for your correction, at least for my own pastime.

From a score of kindred passages I pick the following:

"But does Mr. Churchill really believe that the men who created all this vision of hope" (curious occupation, "creating visions of hope." I cannot quite follow the process), *"the patient men of science, the inventors and writers and teachers, did it all for private gain, or for the aggrandisement of a family?"*

Some of them did; some of them did not. Some of them succeeded in getting much private gain, and in founding families; some of them did not. Probably most of them worked, as most of us work, from

the honourable motives of getting private gain, and also of getting fame and influence. Shakespeare made a comfortable fortune out of popular playwriting. As Goethe says, "Shakespeare and Molière wanted above all things to make money out of their theatres." Tennyson made money and founded a peerage. Even you, I suppose, were not averse from taking a cheque for your papers on "Russia in the Shadows." I hope you got as much for them as they were worth.

Many other instances will occur to you of men of letters, artists, scientists, statesmen, soldiers, inventors, and other men of genius who have been tolerably well rewarded both in cash and fame, some of them abundantly. Whatever may be a fair market price for "creating visions of hope" for the British public, you wouldn't say that you have been underpaid, either in cash or fame, for such "visions of hope" as you have "created." I am inclined to think, my dear Wells, that you rather overdo it. You "create" rather too many of these "visions of hope." However, there is a great demand for them, and you know your public and your market.

Certainly, the majority of the supreme poets, artists, musicians, inventors, philosophers, and scientists, have not worked mainly with the object of providing themselves with motor cars and cosy dividends. They have generally worked for a reward of another sort, the reward that does not

"grow on mortal soil,
But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes
And perfect witness of all-judging Jove."

For the most part, the supreme creative benefactors of mankind have obtained this reward, the reward that they coveted and worked for; not always in exact proportion to their merits, but on the whole with some rough approach to fairness. In our imperfect world, we must own that genius, merit, honesty, and hard work are not always rewarded exactly in their degree. You'll take care, won't you, that in your Collectivist State, everybody gets his exact reward out of your inexhaustible treasury?

My dear Wells, your argument in this sentence is this: "Because many men of genius and great creative benefactors of humanity have not received those rewards in money and those titles which they did not covet or seek, and because a few of them have perished miserably before their other great reward of imperishable fame was bestowed upon them by universal acclaim, therefore let us destroy our present civilization, burn down our employers' shops, and institute a new civilization where everybody shall be rewarded exactly according to his services and merits."

Presumably you will take care that these great creative benefactors of humanity shall receive the lion's share of whatever may be going about in the way of hard cash and titles in your Collectivist State.

If you do not reward them with hard cash and titles or honours, how do you propose to reward them? What other rewards can you give them? You seem to imply that they have been beggarly treated in our present social order and therefore you propose to destroy it. Clearly if you do not give them an extra allowance of hard cash, and honours, then these great creative benefactors—the very class whom it is generally agreed should be most highly paid and most highly honored—will be very much worse off in your Collectivist State than in our present bad old civilization. Whoever else is going to benefit by the change, clearly it will not be the great sovereign benefactors and teachers of mankind.

But if you do give these creative benefactors a substantially increased reward in hard cash and honours in your Collectivist State, is that not sure to provoke envy, discontent and insurrection amongst other classes of workers, such as railway men and boilermakers? I think before you start your Collectivist State, you should draw out a proportionate scale of pay for every class of worker—so much a day for coal miners, so much a day for the star heroines of the film, so much a day for Ministers of State, so much a day for those who "create visions of hope" for the public. Let us have it all clear—at any rate on paper—before we begin burning down our employers' shops as a practical way of giving our Collectivist State a good start and a fair chance.

Draw out your pay sheet in advance, my dear Wells. Let me have a look at it before you proceed to enforce its acceptance upon the various classes of workers. I may be able to give you a useful hint or two.

But you will say that in the succeeding sentence, you point out the one great source of evil and corruption in our present civilization. You demand of Mr. Churchill whether he has the *"assurance to tell us that the rich men of to-day and the powerful men of to-day are anything but the interceptors of the wealth and influence that quite other men have created for mankind?"*

Do you mean *all,* or approximately all, the rich men, approximately *all* the powerful men? If you do, then no more monstrously and transparently false and absurd suggestion was ever made. TOOT! TOOT! TOOT! HOOT! HOOT! HOOT! Open your eyes, my dear Wells. Let me give you a resounding thwack with my flapper's rod and bladder. *POP!* Awake! Awake to facts! Make a list of the richest, and most powerful men in Western European and American civilization. Quite a large number of them are men who have made themselves rich and powerful, not by intercepting the wealth and influence that other men have created for mankind, but by their own conspicuous ability, by severe self-denial, by constant strain of thought and hard

work. By these means they have created vast quantities of wealth for others, and have eased the conditions of living for large populations of workers, and have otherwise conferred lasting benefits on their fellows. I do not say that some of these rich and powerful men may not have received larger rewards than were justly their due. I do not say that some of them may not have gained some of their wealth by dishonest means. There is no possible way of adjusting any scale of measurement. The thing for you to notice—POP!—is that in your Collectivist State you are not likely to have many of these benefactors, for in denying them the rewards of money, power, honour and influence, you take away from them all incentive to train their natural ability, to exercise self-denial, to scorn base trivial delights, and to spend themselves in constant thought and labour. Notice the result in Russia of suppressing and persecuting out of existence this enterprising type.

It is true that among these deservedly rich and powerful men you will not find many scientists, writers, thinkers and artists. These classes do not as a rule, work chiefly for the rewards of money and power. They covet that other greater and more durable reward. But even in the matter of hard cash, many of them fare very comfortably. They have their motor cars and cosy dividends.

Again, many of the most powerful men in the

world are by no means rich. They covet the possession of power and the disposition and government of their fellows more than they covet riches. But again many of these fare very comfortably. They have their motor cars and cosy dividends.

Let us return to the examination of your challenge to Mr. Churchill. *"Has he the assurance to tell us that the rich men of today and the powerful men of today, are anything but the interceptors of the wealth and influence that quite other men have created for mankind."* If Mr. Churchill hasn't the assurance to tell you that, I have, my dear Wells. Your fallacy is that you implicitly assert that all rich men and all powerful men today are dishonest "interceptors" of money and influence that do not belong to them. You do not trouble to ask if there are any exceptions, what probable proportion there is of rich and powerful men who are not "dishonest interceptors," how the rich and powerful men who are not dishonest "interceptors" are to be distinguished from the rich and powerful men who are dishonest "interceptors," or whether there is any means of distinguishing them. You merely make a false general careless sweeping assertion that all rich and all powerful men are grabbing the wealth and influence that quite other men, whose names you do not mention, have "created for mankind."

By the way, you do not tell us the precise process by which these other men have "created influence"

for mankind generally to use and profit by. I suppose by the same process that they "created visions of hope." Nor do you tell us what kind of "influence" it is that these other men have "created." Apparently it is a portable influence, for dishonest rich and powerful men have grabbed it. Apparently also it was "created" in large quantities, for small quantities of influence would not be worth stealing by rich and powerful men. Whether this influence was created in lumps or in a fluid state, where it was stored when the rich and powerful men grabbed it, where they have stored it now, whether in bottles or in tins or in cardboard boxes, and what conceivable use any man, however rich and powerful and dishonest, can make of this stolen influence when he has got it—all these interesting particulars you withhold from us, my dear Wells. You merely bring a loose general accusation against all rich and all powerful men of grabbing vast quantities of influence which unspecified persons have "created for mankind."

A damning accusation truly, but—nebulous, eh? In fact a masterpiece of nebulosity and vasty vagueness? What does that matter? Those whom you are "thinking for" will not analyze it, cannot analyze it. The majority of them wish to believe that they have been defrauded by rich powerful dishonest men, who it seems have not only seized their wealth, but also have seized all these tons or hogsheads of "influence," which rightly belongs to man-

kind generally. And so you establish yourself in the minds of your disciples as a philanthropist who is determined to prevent their being defrauded. And you establish Mr. Churchill in their minds as a greedy adventurer who is determined to defraud them. You build a series of loose general conclusions upon this foundation fallacy. You go on for half a column at the very summit of vasty vagueness in a mist of abstractions, railing at Mr. Churchill, and opening up vistas of the new modern world civilization which is to work so comfortably and so beneficently for all mankind when Collectivism has swept all acquisitive adventurers from the face of the earth.

Upon the monstrous transparent fallacy that *all* rich and *all* powerful men are dishonestly grabbing what does not belong to them, you pile the monstrous assumption that *all* private enterprise snatches away from the workers what they have created. BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! Because a few scientists, artists, poets, thinkers, and other inspired benefactors of humanity, have worked without the object of gaining a monetary reward, you assume that everybody ought to work, and can be persuaded to work, in the same spirit; that in your Collectivist State everybody will as a matter of fact work in the same spirit, with the same lofty disregard of their personal interests, and from the sole motive of securing the diffused and general good of the Collectivist Community.

BOOM! BOOM BOOM!

And all the time you carefully avoid a single word of argument with Mr. Churchill upon the matters which are actually in dispute between you and him. O my most nugatory Wells! My most divaricatory, most divagatory Wells, whither will you wander next?

Let us look very searchingly into this reprehensible habit which, without distinction, you ascribe to all rich and all powerful men—that of grabbing wealth and influence that do not belong to them. You call it "intercepting."

We are about to grapple with a most difficult and infinitely complex question. I shall need your strictest, minutest attention. As your faithful flapper—in the Laputan sense—I will give you three rousing taps.

POP! POP! POP!

Awake! Awake to facts! It is this pachydermatous invulnerability of yours to facts, my dear Wells, —this, this it is that keeps me awake at nights, and saddens the landscape for me when I take my evening walks.

Now let us try to do some clear thinking about "intercepting" and "interceptors." They are a very ancient and hardy race, these whom you call "interceptors." They have existed in all past civilizations. A very pronounced, aggressive, unscrupulous type of "Interceptor" existed in large numbers amongst

God's own chosen people. The old Hebrew prophets called them "Oppressors" and fulminated against them in majestic language, but so far as we can judge, without any practical result, either in the reduction of their numbers or the moderation of their propensities. Our modern terms are "Middlemen," "Exploiters," "Capitalists," "Grabbers," "Profiteers." An assault that I made upon Middlemen more than thirty years ago, while it has been very popular upon the stage, has been as barren in practical results as the loftier denunciations of the Hebrew prophets.

"Oppressor" is a good term to use for those men whom we can clearly prove to be abusing their position of master, employer, or overseer, to "intercept" money or advantages which are due to their servants. The difficulty is to prove what is fair and what is unfair. Servants and masters make such entirely different estimates.

"Exploit" and "Exploiters" are bad and misleading terms to connote the relations of masters to servants and employees. The words have been diverted from their legitimate meaning. They are viciously used to stir up in all servants a sense of grievance, a feeling that to be employed at all is necessarily to be taken advantage of by an unscrupulous employer. There is cruel and unjust exploiting, and there are cruel and unjust exploiters. There is fair and beneficent exploiting, and there

are fair and beneficent exploiters. It would help us to think more clearly on these matters if for a while we ceased to talk about exploiters and being exploited. Why will we use words to befog ourselves? The great majority of men in any State must necessarily be "exploited," as the great majority of the cells in any body must necessarily be "exploited" by the brain, and must work in obedience to its directions, in order that the organism may fulfil its functions. The brain must "exploit" the cells. The cells cannot "exploit" the brain. Sometimes the stomach tries to "exploit" the brain and the other cells. This is bad physiological economy. We see instances of it in almost every bus, tube, and subway.

The workers suffer most from "exploiting" when they throw off their legitimate "exploiters," that is, their employers, and fall into the hands of theorists like yourself and Lenin. Bad and unscrupulous as many "exploiters" of English labour have been, not one of them has "exploited" his workmen with a tithe of the ruthless cruelty and severity of Lenin —twelve or fourteen hours a day forced labour, no right to strike, and torture or death for disobedience.

The word "interceptors" which you have used is perhaps the best word that we can use in trying to unravel this very tangled knot of economics. You used it, my dear Wells, in your usual loose confused way, without seeking to find its implications, without

putting it into any relation with the universal permanent instincts, motives and tendencies of human nature.

You used the word "interceptors" to signify those who unfairly grab "wealth and influence" which belong to mankind; and you implicitly affirmed that all rich and all powerful men without exception, without qualification, are guilty of this evil practice. If you say that you did not mean to imply that all rich and all powerful men, without exception, without qualification, pursue this evil habit to the detriment and impoverishment of their fellows, then your passages that follow make even worse nonsense than if you did imply that this evil habit is possessed by all rich and all powerful men without exception, without qualification. You challenge Mr. Churchill to deny that "the rich men of today and the powerful men of today are *anything but* the interceptors of the wealth and influence that other men have created for mankind." It is an unqualified statement, and as is your custom, you assume it to be proved, and you pile up much vasty vagueness on the top of it.

I am not denying that many rich men and many powerful men do abuse their position, do most unfairly and most grievously "intercept" wealth and other good things, which, if this were a perfect world, would belong, if not to mankind at large, at least to more deserving possessors. Let us make a searching inquiry into this very prevalent habit of

intercepting wealth. Let us ask who are the interceptors; how many or how few of them there are; how they are placed in a position to intercept; what kinds of wealth they intercept, and to what an extent they intercept it.

A most useful and obliging term, this "Interceptor," my dear Wells. You could not have chosen a better word for our purpose, as we shall find, if we use it, not carelessly and loosely as you have done, but carefully, and discerningly, and with our eyes wide open to facts. We will track these interceptors to their lairs and hunt them down. We will turn them inside out and learn all about them. They claim a letter all to themselves. I will therefore release you for the time, and bid you prepare for a thorough examination of "Interceptors" and "Intercepting" in my next letter. Meantime, suspensively yours,

HENRY ARTHUR JONES.

February 25, 1921.

LETTER FIFTEEN.

THE INTERCEPTORS OF WEALTH.

My Dear Wells,—

While writing these letters to you, I have many times had occasion to fear that your giant mind does not mirror any approximately correct image of the concatenation of things in the world outside it. Especially am I distressed to think that your mental retina is obscured with a false representation of the interception and the interceptors of wealth.

Let us settle down to the earnest consideration of this important question. Once more, 'Tenshun!—POP!—I like this office of flapper—in the Laputan sense.

Make a vast picture to yourself. Imagine all the desirable concrete palpable things there are in the world that can be counted as wealth: food, dresses, houses, furniture, jewels, motor cars, horses, books, wines, toys—everything that any inhabitant of the earth may wish to possess and make use of and enjoy. The immensely greater part of this wealth, nearly all of it, is being constantly consumed, and is being constantly reproduced. It is constantly changing hands and passing from one inhabitant of the

earth to some other inhabitant of the earth. It is in a state of eternal flux, and quantities of it, large or small, huge accumulations of it, or mere bits and sweepings of all sorts and sizes, are, under constantly changing and diverse circumstances, coming actually into the possession, or passing within the reach, or near the reach, or within the sight, or can be figured in the envious imagination, of every inhabitant of this earth. I do not mention the soil of the earth, or such abstract things as educational advantages and social influence. I am ready to prove that if they could be brought into the account, they would not affect my argument or my conclusions. Nor need we, for our present purpose, differentiate between wealth that is acquired by personal exertion, and wealth that is inherited or received by gift. It is clear that the State cannot prohibit all inheritance of wealth. It is equally clear, and we are all agreed, that large accumulations of wealth should be heavily taxed upon the death of their possessor. The amount of death duties should be fixed at the point where it will cause a disadvantageous or dangerous reaction upon the general business activities and enterprises of the community, to raise them more highly. And this point will always be variable and obscure and disputable. For the purposes of our present inquiry, we need not here make any distinction between wealth that is personally acquired, and wealth that is inherited.

Now my dear Wells, I hope you have formed a rough mental picture of all this wealth of various kinds, and of these two thousand millions of men and women, who are all of them in actual possession, or within reach, or out of reach, of some quite small, or of some considerable portion, or of some huge accumulation of it. It will help us to realize the general situation, if we picture to ourselves a huge river, a Mississippi, replenished from the frozen mountain resources of Nature, in a constantly changing stream of wealth of all kinds, fed on both sides with innumerable tributaries of all sizes from broad streams to the merest trickling rivulets, all of them flowing and charged with constantly changing wealth of all kinds. All along the banks of all these streams from the head of the smallest rivulet to the broad flood at the mouth of the great river, are thickly crowded the two thousand millions, all the inhabitants of the earth, jostling each other for the best available places on the banks of that stream which is most accessible to them, so that they may draw from it some portion of the wealth that is floating by. Some of the two thousand millions are so badly placed that with their utmost exertions they can barely scoop out a few cupfuls to meet their necessities. Others are so advantageously placed that they can easily divert thousands of gallons of overflow to fructify their private pleasure gardens.

The metaphor will hold good if we represent to

ourselves that the appetites and demands of the two thousand millions of strugglers on the banks are so great that the stream is always and everywhere in danger of running shallow, and in many places of being dried up. If the waters at any favoured spot run higher than usual and afford the lucky denizens a supply larger than their needs, they immediately multiply in numbers, and themselves reduce and defeat their own advantages. I hope you realize in your mind the large rough picture I have drawn, which faithfully represents the attitude of all the inhabitants of the earth towards the wealth of all sorts that there is upon and within the earth.

I need your very careful attention here, so I flap you—POP!—Please to notice, my dear Wells, that *every one of these two thousand millions is an interceptor of wealth.* For the moment we will not inquire what the fair share of any individual should be, or whether any or many of the two thousand millions are intercepting more than their fair share of the general stream of wealth. To a very small, or to a very large amount, fairly or unfairly, every inhabitant of the earth is intercepting some portion of the available wealth of the earth every hour of his life. He appropriates to his own use some desirable thing or things which would otherwise be intercepted and appropriated by somebody else.

Now turn to your reply to Mr. Churchill. For your own purpose, in order that you may build up

a Collectivist State in a vasty vague region in a vasty vague future, you imply and take for a proved fact, that today all the rich and all the powerful men on the earth are dishonestly intercepting wealth and influence that other men who worked without any reward or thought of reward, "created" at some unspecified date or dates for the use and benefit of mankind generally. That is what you affirm, or affirm to the extent that you make it a sweeping indictment against all rich and all powerful men and arraign them for being thieves, and oppressors, and spoilers of mankind. BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! HOOT! HOOT! HOOT! HOWL! HOWL! HOWL!

To begin with, the very great part of the world wealth which every one of us, in different degrees, and according to the more or less favourable positions we occupy, is intercepting and appropriating—the very great part of all this wealth is destroyed and renewed from day to day, from year to year. It doesn't take long to destroy all the wealth there is in any country. Lenin told the Russian workers that all the rich men and all the powerful men had intercepted wealth that belonged to *them*. Lenin advised the workers to intercept it back again. When they tried to intercept it back, all the wealth melted away. Lenin, with your active sympathy, is now trying to intercept more wealth that he may melt it away.

Your major premise that rich and powerful men

are the only interceptors, is plainly false, my dear Wells, and all that you build upon it is vasty vague inspissated nonsense. You see that, don't you? You don't see it? Well, I must show you.

POP! Take notice, my dear Wells, that every man, woman and child on the face of the earth is an interceptor of wealth every day of his life. The poor half paid sweated seamstress, who very obviously does not intercept her fair share, does yet intercept her miserable pittance. She may intercept less in a year than a jewelled furcoated courtesan may intercept in one evening. Nevertheless they are both interceptresses, and take out of the general stream of wealth certain things for their own use.

I have presented an extreme contrast of two women, one of whom, by the disadvantage of her position on the banks of the stream, is unable to intercept sufficient for a bare livelihood in return for useful service rendered to the community, and the other, who by the advantage of her position on the bank, is able to intercept a great quantity of wealth in return for corrupting and polluting the community. We all allow there are grievous cases of plainly unfair interception of wealth. Let us redress as many of them as we can. We shall find it a difficult and complicated task. Frankly I cannot see how even so monstrously unfair an interception of wealth as is manifest in the seamstress and the courtesan, can be dealt with by any general

law. How do you propose in your Collectivist State to ensure that a pretty young dissolute woman shall not intercept more wealth and influence than a poor virtuous ugly old one? Think it over.

But in the overwhelming majority of cases, there is no such easy way of distinguishing between what is a fair and what is an unfair interception of wealth. This is our first difficulty. I daresay you have solved it all in your study. But trot your theories out of your study into the actual world, and set them to work amongst actual men and women.

Take yourself for instance. Under the social order and British Government which protect you, and which you constantly abuse, you have intercepted from the general stream of wealth that flowed within your reach, many desirable pieces of private property, amongst other things a motor car and cosy dividends. Are you quite sure, my dear Wells, that you have not intercepted more than your fair share of wealth? Are you quite sure that your motor car ought not to belong to some more deserving writer—myself for instance? I am quite sure that you and I should place very different estimates upon the amount of wealth that you ought to intercept in payment for your social philosophy.

When you begin to study this large question, my dear Wells, you will see that in the very great majority of cases there is no possible way of deciding what is fair and what is unfair interception

of wealth from the general stream. We make alarmingly different estimates of what is a fair interception of wealth, according as to whether it is an interception by ourselves or by our class, or by somebody else or some other class. Your estimate in your reply to Mr. Churchill is that *all* interception of wealth and influence by rich and powerful men is unfair. If you were living in the real world instead of in your world of modern ideas and theories, and if you could intercept back again from all the rich and powerful men all the wealth which according to you they have unfairly intercepted, you would still find yourself confronted with the plaguy question, as to what deserving person should next be allowed to intercept it, and in what proportions. While you were setting up your machinery to solve these two questions, all the wealth would melt away, as it has done in Russia, and as it will do in your Collectivist State if you ever get it started.

A terribly difficult, complicated question this, my dear Wells, as to how we can make a just estimate of what amount of wealth any individual one of us should be allowed to intercept, and as to how we can stop all the people who are intercepting more than their fair quantities! We are all the more dismayed when we find that often, even in the grossest, most palpable cases of unfair interception, we cannot get at the rascals without bringing new

evils upon innocent interceptors, and without inflicting wider injury and injustice than we are seeking to remedy.

That was what we discovered when we tried to make our war profiteers disgorge their filthy unjust plunder. If ever there was a class of unfair interceptors who deserved to be brought to account, and whom it seemed easy to bring to account, and to visit with the utmost punishment and mark with lasting infamy, it was these greedy scoundrels—the war profiteers. But we found that we couldn't get at them. We couldn't sort them out from other interceptors of wealth who had perhaps gained much from the war, but who had rendered such valuable service to the country that it was impossible to deny them a large reward. We had to let the profiteers escape with their plunder, because no line could be drawn between the guilty and innocent interceptors, or between fair and unfair intercepting by the same interceptor.

Of course you could have solved the whole matter in your study. I was saying to Spofforth only this morning: "There is no social problem that Wells cannot solve in five minutes—if you only leave him alone in his study, and don't raise any objections to his way of solving it."

Once more—POP!—with my flapper's rod and bladder. Please observe, my dear Wells, that your monstrous assumption that rich men and powerful

men are the only unfair interceptors of wealth, is plainly disproved by facts every day. Recently, owing, amongst other causes, to unwise and unfair land legislation, and to the determination of our Minister of Education to ask our young carpenters and bricklayers questions about Cicero, instead of teaching them so far as possible to build houses for their fellow workers—owing to these and other causes, there has been, as you know, a great shortage of houses for our working men. There has also been a great shortage of houses for the better classes. But never mind them. Let us think first of the working classes, seeing that they suffer most grievously when house accommodation is short.

Before the war, it was a fair day's work for a bricklayer to lay from 1,000 to 1,400 bricks a day. Since the war it has often been impossible to get many of our bricklayers to lay more than 350 bricks a day. Yet they have taken for this quarter day's work a full day's wages, reckoned upon the scale of a full day's work. Do you or do you not consider that such bricklayers are unfair interceptors of wealth? You do, or you do not?

A rich and powerful man has exploited (in the best sense of the word) a large slice of land in one of our African colonies, and under white supervision, has exploited (in the best sense of the word) many of the natives, and has set them to work gathering nuts, from whence is taken the fat for

margarine, thus supplying many of our English workers with a cheap and nutritious food. He has paid the natives good wages according to their circumstances, has made them comfortable according to their standards of comfort, and has introduced amongst them some rudiments of civilization. By these means he has "created" a comparatively large amount of wealth for the natives, has cheapened food for English workers, and has intercepted a considerable amount of wealth for himself. Do you consider that in this transaction, he is an unfair interceptor of wealth? You do, or you do not?

Ponder all these things, my dear Wells. Ponder also that when you start your Collectivist State, you will have to estimate, or to get a bureau of officials to estimate, what amount of wealth every individual in it is to be allowed to intercept, and what in each transaction is a fair interception. Next you will have to find some means of enforcing your rates of interception, and of punishing unfair interceptors. Think it all out carefully before you start your Collectivist State. You'll need a vast number of giant minds like your own to set it going, and a vaster number to keep it going. Before it has been running a week, it will be apparent to you that our present rich interceptors, unfair and unscrupulous as many of them are, do on the whole, in this very imperfect world of ours, intercept a much smaller proportion of the total amount of wealth "created"

than will be intercepted by the numerous officials who will have to be paid in your Collectivist State for seeing that nobody intercepts more than his fair share. It should also be plain to you that in your Collectivist State very little wealth will be "created," for you will take away the main incentive for "creating" wealth at all.

Think this out in all its bearings, my dear Wells. You have thought it out? Think it all out again. Enlighten the whole problem for yourself by remembering that the staple of human conduct and character remains much the same, and cannot be suddenly or considerably improved. Graft, backshish, bribery, venality, jobbery, baseness, corruption, have always infested all the roads and paths of human intercourse, and like highwaymen, have sprung upon the travellers and called upon them to stand and deliver. In all questions of economics you are a very simple-minded man led away by your theories, but I cannot think you so simple as to believe that in your Collectivist State, new forms and practices of bribery and graft will not creep in and utterly impoverish your Paradise. If you are so simple minded as to believe that your Collectivist State will not pay a monstrous toll in new forms of bribery and graft, I entreat you to acquaint yourself with the terrible cost, the terrible inefficiency and the gigantic blundering of the Socialist legislation that was necessarily introduced during the war.

'Tenshun! my dear Wells!—POP!—I am about to submit to you a rough calculation which I cannot prove, and which you cannot disprove. We all allow that there is an appalling amount of hideous graft and corruption and oppression in our present commercial world. Owing to the enormously increased number and size and cost of certain commercial enterprises; owing to the universal publicity which today is thrown upon all large transactions, movements and events; owing perhaps most of all, to the fact that when volumes and millions of money are being poured into somebody's pockets, many of us are subconsciously uneasy because some part of these vast sums cannot be intercepted into our own pockets—owing to these causes, we are all much more aware of the existence of graft, more alert to watch it, more alive to its evil effects, and more alarmed at its magnitude.

But consider the present enormous volume and amount of the world's commercial transactions, multiplied as they are out of all computation as compared with the volume and amount of the world's commercial transactions a hundred years ago. Next consider the more backward countries of today where commercial transactions are on a relatively small scale, and are conducted by ways and methods more nearly approaching the ways and methods of a hundred years ago. I think that those who sufficiently know these backward countries would esti-

mate, that in other days the old-fashioned forms of graft intercepted a larger percentage of the total sum of the monetary transactions than the modern forms of graft intercept in advanced countries today. It is of course impossible to make anything approaching an exact calculation. But I believe that those who are best qualified to make a rough estimate, would give it as their opinion, that though there is an abominable increase in the total amount of abominable graft levied today upon the community, it is probably less in proportion to the sum total of the monetary transactions than in many former periods of history.

This probability does not absolve us from constant vigilance and constant war upon all those forms of graft and unfair interception of wealth that can be clearly discriminated and effectively crushed without bringing worse evils upon the community. It does warn us to refrain from violently pulling down our present social order in the foolish hope that we can build up a new social order that will give no shelter to graft and unfair interception of wealth.

One thing more, my dear Wells, I entreat you to notice.—POP!—Many of these large accumulations of wealth are always melting down; all of them are constantly overflowing into the smaller rivulets of commercial intercourse, and there dispensing benefits to more or less deserving persons. There is a soul

of goodness in things evil. Follow me a little closely here. You are personally concerned.

I suppose none of us has a very soft corner in his heart for the meat packers of Chicago. But during the war, one firm supplied the English Government with meat for our soldiers at a total cost which was some millions of pounds less than the English Goveernment could itself have supplied the meat. Those millions of pounds were thus saved to English taxpayers, of whom you are one. Therefore your own taxes were reduced, not indeed to any considerable extent. Still by that operation, and by similar operations, your taxes have been a little reduced, and you are thereby a little better able to keep a motor car, and perhaps to add a little to your cosy dividends.

There is a concatenation and correlation of all these things, my dear Wells, which you do not perceive. Tilt your mind toward facts. If you cannot grasp and embrace them, being, as they are, the implacable foes of your theories, yet tilt your mind towards them. Conceive it as possible that though you may refuse to embrace facts, they may one day quite irresistibly embrace you. Turn over all the papers that you wrote during the war, and see how many facts that you prophesied against have since embraced you, and hold you in their grip. Therefore, my dear Wells, place yourself in a respectful attitude of possible future receptivity towards facts.

I think I have shown you that you have formed a

crude and wrong notion of the interception of wealth, and of the persons who are intercepting it. It is both false and absurd to represent all the rich and all the powerful men as the sole interceptors of wealth that other people have created for the use of mankind generally. You see that, don't you?

All of us are constant interceptors throughout our life; and all of us at times, either unconsciously and inadvertently or consciously and dishonestly, intercept from the general stream of wealth small or large amounts which do not fairly and rightly belong to us, or at least which would belong to some more deserving person but for our interception. The first difficulty is to find out who is the deserving person or persons whom we ought to have allowed to intercept these sums, standing back ourselves, and being thus rendered unable to pay our income tax.

This difficulty of finding out who are the deserving persons who ought to be allowed to intercept the sums that are now being unfairly intercepted, and what is the proportion which each one of these deserving persons should be allowed to intercept,—this difficulty increases according to the increase of the sums in question. You, my dear Wells, would say that the State should intercept all wealth as soon as it is created. But then the greater part of it melts away, leaving a vast number of interceptors and little or nothing to intercept. If any considerable portion of wealth remains after it has been

intercepted by the State, you will still find yourself confronted by the same insoluble problem—who are the lucky or the deserving persons who are now to be allowed to intercept it from the State for their own use, and in what proportions?

Granted, however, that we have found it possible to settle how much each individual or class is to be allowed to intercept, we are met with the further difficulty of providing official machinery to carry out our awards. Having provided the machinery, is there one ten-thousandth part of a chance that it will work for a week? Revolve these things in your giant mind, my dear Wells.

Before advancing the argument a step further, I will give myself the welcome relaxation, and you the salutary stimulus of an intromissary—POP!—I didn't hurt you? I am not putting my full strength of arm into these admonitory smacks. I have promised to let you off easily. But I notice that your cheek seems to be tingling from the repeated visits of my flapper's bauble. You might now perhaps obey the Scriptural injunction, and turn your other cheek to the smiter.

I would have you notice, my dear Wells, that not only is every one of the two thousand millions of the inhabitants of the earth an interceptor of wealth, but that with comparatively few exceptions, every one of them is intercepting as much as he conveniently can. Further, again with comparatively few

exceptions, none of these two thousand millions, however great the quantity of wealth he may be intercepting, considers that he is not justified in intercepting as much more as comes within his reach. Further, again with comparatively few exceptions, none of these two thousand millions, however great the quantity he is intercepting, considers that he is intercepting more than his fair share. Notice also that these exceptions are chiefly amongst those whose parents and ancestors have intercepted more wealth than their descendants have any pressing need to appropriate to their own use.

Yet once again. Every one of these two thousand millions is himself the judge of how much he is entitled to intercept, and he generally fixes this amount at something considerably higher than the amount he is actually intercepting, and rarely at anything less than the utmost amount which he may possibly be able to intercept. How many men have you met, my dear Wells, who do not intercept all that conveniently comes in their way because they feel they ought to leave some part of it to be intercepted by some more deserving person? How many men have you met, who being uncomfortably aware that they are intercepting more than their fair share of wealth, do as a matter of fact refrain from intercepting that portion of it which they consider they cannot justly claim as their due? Would you think it wise of them to refrain from intercepting that

portion, on the very doubtful chance that it might be intercepted by a more deserving person, and not, as would be more likely, by some cunning rascal who is already intercepting more than his fair share?

A very complex matter, this interception of wealth, my dear Wells, and very difficult to solve! Except of course when you solve it in your study by simply dividing all the interceptors into sheep and goats—rich men who are dishonestly intercepting all the wealth that belongs to mankind, and poor men who are really entitled to intercept it all, but can scarcely intercept anything because the rich men have already intercepted almost everything. Now —POP!—

I want you to tilt your giant mind towards one or two plain facts. If you won't tilt it yourself, let me tilt it for you. The first plain fact is this: However many of these two thousand millions of interceptors of wealth may be aware that they are intercepting a larger amount of wealth than is their share, however many of them may be amiably disposed to stand back a bit, and allow unspecified and problematically more deserving persons to push in and intercept that surplus which they are unfairly intercepting—as a matter of fact, it is impossible for the very great majority of these amiable interceptors to carry out their good intentions. Further, if they could, it would be a quite futile piece of useless generosity on their part.

Imagine to yourself the two thousand millions of interceptors, all thickly crowded and jostling each other for the best accessible places on the banks of our Mississippi, and of all its tributaries up to the remote source of the smallest rivulet, where the poor seamstress stands trying to dip her cup into the mere trickle of wealth that flows by her. We will ourselves give her a spoonful or two out of our own pail, to relieve her most pressing wants. But we cannot give spoonfuls to all the poor seamstresses, or our own pail would soon be empty. The poor seamstress is but one out of a vast crowd of indigents. The banks of the tiniest rivulet are as thickly peopled with interceptors as the broadest reaches of the giant river, more thickly crowded, for the poor multiply the fastest. From this fact it follows that if by some master-stroke of economic legerdemain, we could transport all the poor and put them into good positions down the stream, yet in a very short time the banks of the rivulets would be as crowded as ever with needy interceptors. The general situation would be pretty much the same. Charity must needs do her best, must never check her warm heart, or her ready hand. But do what she will, she can but palliate and alleviate. The numbers of the needy and desperate interceptors will remain fairly constant. The general situation will remain the same.

Now suppose that a certain number of conscience-

stricken interceptors realize that they are intercepting more than their fair share of the wealth that is floating by them. They give up their advantageous places on the banks, and allow a number of the less scrupulous interceptors behind them to take their places. Much about the same quantities and kinds of wealth will be intercepted, but on the whole by less worthy interceptors, while the more worthy unselfish interceptors will find themselves jostled into less advantageous positions, some of them being pushed along till they reach the impoverished seamstresses. Their generosity will have been quite futile. The general situation will remain the same.

Notice, my dear Wells, that the overwhelming majority of the interceptors of wealth, that is to say of all the inhabitants of the earth, are wedged in positions on the banks of the various streams, which they cannot give up, which they dare not give up except at the risk of being pushed into less advantageous positions, so constant is the struggle against them, not merely for advantageous positions, but very often for positions which will scarcely give them a livelihood.

It is the universal instinct of self-preservation which urges the great majority of these interceptors to hold fast to their present positions, and to be always seeking for better positions where they can intercept more wealth. Search into this matter and you will find that in planning your Collectivist State

you have ignored the constant pressure of this universal instinct of self-preservation upon the overwhelming majority of the interceptors of wealth. It is a fatal defect in your social philosophy that you suppose mankind will act in obedience to your theories, rather than according to the prompting of their dominant instincts.

Tilt your mind towards this fact, my dear Wells, that in any State composed of actual men and women as we know them, whatever amount of wealth any one of its individual members may be intercepting, whether large or small, whether fairly or unfairly, the great majority of them will, according to their opportunities, continue to intercept as much wealth as they conveniently can, and will be always seeking for positions where they can intercept more wealth. This does not imply that average human nature is growing more base and selfish and covetous than it has always been. It does imply that the instinct of self-preservation urges us all to provide for ourselves and our families, to advance ourselves and our families, and to leave the widest possible margin of safety from poverty and discomfort. And for the most of us that margin of safety will never be wide enough.

You will claim that your plan of a Collectivist State allows a margin of safety for everybody. The Lord enlighten your understanding! Let me show you what the establishment of your Collectivist State

means. Continue to picture to yourself the crowded two thousand millions of interceptors of wealth, jostling in their different positions on the banks of the great river and its tributaries, all of them constantly employed in intercepting the most varied and the most unequal quantities of wealth, from the poor seamstress to the multi-millionaire. The metaphor is an economical truth in a geographical figure. Economically it is exact.

Notice that the positions of every one of these interceptors,—and of the future two thousand millions and more of interceptors who will gradually take their places, is determined by the configuration of the land. There are the great mountains behind them where are stored the vast frozen resources of Nature, which are drawn upon to form the various streams which flow by the crowds of interceptors, through the high bare lands where the little rivulets begin their course, down by slopes and gradients to the more gently sloping fertile plains which slope to the broad river mouth. You survey the scene, and you say: "Here is a monstrous thing! That one man should be allowed to intercept thousands of gallons, while another man, more deserving, can only intercept a few pints! I will change all this. I will abolish these shameful inequalities. In the future nobody shall intercept more than his fair share. Stand back from the stream, all you rich intercep-

tors! Let all the poor interceptors take your places! Meantime I will send in an army of officials to shovel the land perfectly level, and to cut channels of equal depth and breadth for the wealth to flow in, so that each of you can have equal access to it, and each of you can intercept his fair share, and no more."

The great mass of the impoverished interceptors are enthusiastically in favour of your plan. No wonder. Every one of them, even the man who is fairly comfortable, is convinced that he is not intercepting his fair share. They immediately try to seize the more favoured places of the rich interceptors, and there is a tremendous scuffle and confusion. While the rich and the poor interceptors are fighting for the best places, a great volume of wealth slips out of the reach of all of them, and is irrecoverably lost. Meantime your army of officials have set to work to alter the entire configuration of the land, to make it perfectly level, and to cut new equal channels for the wealth to flow in. They build great dams to stop the present resources from flowing in the present channels, while they cut the new equal channels. They soon find that the levelling of the land is altogether too gigantic an operation for their powers. They have levelled a few yards and there are thousands of miles yet to level. The dams they have built in order that they may level the land, have blocked up the vast resources of

Nature which rest above them, frozen, remote, inaccessible. The streams of wealth have ceased to flow. There are but a few poor tricklings for anybody to intercept. The former poor interceptors perish by millions.

Behold, my dear Wells, the dreadful picture which shows you what you set out to do when you begin to found your Collectivist State. It is a rough faithful picture of what has happened in Russia. Lenin may be Marxian. You may be Collectivist. You are both trying to level the whole configuration of Nature's vast continent by an army of officials. I read in this morning's paper ("New York Times," March 2, 1921) the latest account of conditions in Russia. The sum of her past horrors and miseries seems a petty tale compared with the terrible and ever progressive famine, suffering, disease and misery which wrap the land and all its people in one black universal pall. Take two or three items out of fifty that daunt and sicken the imagination to conceive.

"Twenty million peasants are starving."—half the population of Great Britain.

"Agriculture is perishing. Labour, power, manure, milk for the children—everything is perishing."

For a taste of how state officialism works compared with private enterprise, take the following: "Nineteen institutions have to be gone through

before a small amount of axle grease can be obtained." *

"The Revolts against the Bolshevist power are being suppressed with the utmost cruelty." In England we pet and coddle our traitors.

Not very encouraging to a promoter of a Collectivist State founded upon virtually the same principles, eh? It seems to establish the following general principle for the guidance of Socialists, Communists and Collectivists: "When private property is abolished, and private enterprise forbidden, in lieu of a population of unequally prosperous interceptors, a state of affairs is rapidly approached where everybody is trying to intercept everything, and nothing is left for anybody to intercept."

Whew! Whew! Whew! I wipe my forehead as I announce the end of our discussion upon these interceptors of wealth. I think we may claim that our time we have spent upon them has been profitably employed. You have learned a great deal about them, haven't you? You know now that your view that all rich men are dishonest interceptors of wealth, and that they are the only interceptors of wealth, is quite false and absurd. You understand now that we are all interceptors of wealth, and that the majority of mankind, obeying the universal instinct

** Yesterday, May-Day, at a big demonstration in Hyde Park, London, resolutions were passed "hailing with enthusiasm the success of the Russian Soviet Government." O my brothers, will you not learn? 2nd. May, 1921.*

of self-preservation, do intercept, and will always intercept as much as comes in their way. You won't again use the words "Interceptors of wealth" in a confused vicious sense to stir up class hatred, will you?

Well, I hope you will lay this lesson to heart. Don't you feel refreshed and invigorated by these letters of mine, my dear Wells? Don't you feel that they take you into a clearer atmosphere where you get some insight into the universal concatenation of things? Don't you feel grateful to me for lifting you out of the regions of vasty vagueness where you were wandering, and planting your feet on firm ground? It cheers me to think that you recognize and value my constant labours for your enlightenment. In a mood of anticipatory gratitude for what I may further say to you, await my next letter.

Pertinaciously yours,

HENRY ARTHUR JONES.

March 4, 1921.

LETTER SIXTEEN.

ARGUING WITH A TURNIP.

My Dear Wells,—

I hope I have convinced you of the reckless confusion and radical unsoundness of your thinking upon economic matters and of the ruinous mischief of your Collectivist theories. We will now proceed to test the quality of your thinking upon world politics, and to dissect your International theories.

Spofforth has fallen asleep in his armchair. Is he really asleep, or is he only shamming? Is he cunningly waiting in ambush till we moot some more than usually outrageous fallacy of yours, with the intent of springing out upon you, and putting a peremptory and tragic end to your further emission of fallacies? That shall not happen if I can protect you, my dear Wells. It is true that some stern warning is needed to those Englishmen who always think virulently against their own country. But I would not have you sent to any sudden and violent expiation. I would have you spared and given a chance to repent. It is my hope and endeavour to make a good British citizen of you. I suppose you don't feel inclined to sing a bar or two of the

National Anthem, just to oblige me, and to soften Spofforth's heart towards you, if, as I suspect, he is really awake under his closed eyes? Come now!—Just a bar or two. Pipe up! "God save our——" You won't? Then we must settle down to a rigorous examination of these International theories of yours.

As I have said, and as events daily asseverate, there is but one question before the civilized world today—Patriotism or Internationalism? Until each nation has answered that question within its own borders, it cannot quiet down into peace and security, but must needs be clashing against its neighbours in ever-growing mutual insecurity and torment of unrest.

We are now about to address ourselves to the consideration of the most important matter that has engaged us during these conferences. It is necessary that I should have the fullest measure of your attention, and for your own sake I will take no risks. I will therefore ask you please to submit while I buffet you with my flapper's bauble till I am reasonably sure that you are wide awake, and in a blessed state of receptivity towards facts. POP! POP! POP! POP! POP! POP! POP! POP! Hey! Hey! My arm is aching. It's no sinecure, my dear Wells, this office of flapper to you—in the Laputan sense.

Now, 'Tenshun!

Let us turn again to this inexhaustible polypreg-

nant reply of yours to Mr. Winston Churchill. You bring innumerable accusations against him and against the social order which he represents. You pour out these charges against him, dozens of them —he has "a dread of a coming sanity, a coming supremacy of justice and order throughout the world,"—and so on in rambling multitudinous incoherency. "A coming supremacy of justice and order throughout the world!" That's what we all desire, what all of us who are honestly working and honestly thinking, are seeking to obtain! But remember that the Kaiser would have assured you that he also was fighting to bring about a "coming supremacy of justice and order throughout the world." You talk, my dear Wells! You talk! You talk! You do not frame a clear intelligible indictment. You never attempt to define or substantiate any one of these vague wholesale charges. You talk! You talk! You talk! You give us no precise indication of how a "supremacy of justice and order throughout the world" are to be secured, except vaguely by "hard constructive work, the discipline and self-abnegation that lie before us all." You do not say who is to do the hard constructive work, what kind of discipline is to be enforced, who is to enforce it, who is to practise the self-abnegation. Let us hope it will not be the possessors of motor cars and cosy dividends. You talk! You talk, my dear Wells! O how you talk!

However, it seems that Mr. Churchill is obstructing and delaying this coming "supremacy of justice and order throughout the world" which is to be secured by the operation of your theories, and by the practice of the new kind of honesty which you and Lenin have invented. But owing to Mr. Churchill and other wicked obstructors, you say there is a prospect before us of "war and war and more war." You admit, however, that your own International Collectivist Paradise cannot be achieved by peaceful means. *"Not in a day,"* you warn us, *"not without blood and toil and passion is a new order brought into the world."* You do see there will be some fighting.

In justice to yourself I think I ought to wake Spofforth and tell him that you have got another glimmering. Spofforth grudges you the smallest perception of facts. I am always pointing out to Spofforth that, purblind though you may be, and contumaciously impervious to any fact that contradicts your theories, you do get occasional glimmerings. You don't follow them and find your way to the light, but you do every now and then get these stray glimmerings. That's what gives me hope for you.

In any case you tell us that this reign of Internationalism, this Collectivist Paradise where there is to be a world-wide supremacy of justice and order, where men are to be free "from error and passion,"

where wicked adventurers like Mr. Churchill are to be rigorously excluded, where there is to be a perfect economy of resources, where there are to be "sane adjustments" against every possible annoyance to anybody, where large delicious omelettes will grow on every tree, where the best native oysters will multiply in everybody's rain-water tub—you tell us, my dear Wells, that this Paradise is not to be obtained without our fighting for it.

I wish you could have managed the affair without bloodshed. It would have been such a triumph for your theories. It seems such a bad start to begin with fighting. If we get into the habit of fighting outside our Paradise, how can we be sure we may not keep it up when we get inside? And if there is to be a fight for this Paradise, how can we be sure that your disciples will win? Suppose the enemy forces headed by Mr. Churchill should give your disciples a licking? Then there wouldn't be any Paradise at all. You would merely have sold your disciples. By the way, your main charge against our present social order is that it leads to war. Yet you are going to start your International Paradise by a war to obtain it. How you flounder in self-contradictions!

Candidly, my dear Wells, I don't like this prospect which you open up to us of fighting for our Collectivist Paradise. I don't like it at all. However, if there is to be fighting, it's as well we should know

it beforehand. How much fighting do you think there is likely to be? I am not disposed to do very much myself. For let me tell you, this Collectivist Paradise of yours, as you design it, is going to be a terribly dull place to live in. I shouldn't wonder if its inhabitants get up an occasional fight amongst themselves just to relieve its deadly monotonous mechanical routine. In any case you promise us some fighting. We are not going to have "freedom from error and passion" without a bloody preliminary scuffle to make sure we get it.

What we are anxious to know, my dear Wells, is this:—how much fighting we have got to make up our minds for, in order to set up this Collectivist Internationalist State of yours? You assure us in your vasty vague way that your State is to be "capable of sane adjustments against war." Seeing that war earthquakes are fearfully destructive, you are going to set up this seismological apparatus to prevent them. But you tell us that we shall have to endure some amount of earthquaking as the necessary consequences of fixing up your apparatus. How much? How much blood is to be shed to set up this Internationalist State? You are not prepared to say. It is not your business to weigh, and search, and consider, and trace consequences. It is your business to promulgate theories, to blow rosy bubbles filled with wordy inanities, and set them floating

to the applause and admiration of people who cannot think for themselves.

Let me tilt your mind towards the perception of this stark gaunt fact—there is no possibility of setting up any form of Internationalist Government on this earth until mankind have sacrificed themselves and wasted themselves wholesale in at least two world wars, more widely spread, more cruel, more bloody, and more destructive than the world war we have just finished. The yellow races and the negro races will be protagonists in these future world wars. If you wish to detect the germination of future wars, follow closely the proceedings of the League of Nations, a debating society which has been established at Geneva for the purpose of inducing every nation in the world to meddle in the affairs of every other nation. I do not say that world forces which we cannot control, are not driving us towards International catastrophes of unimaginable magnitude and duration. But I do say, with the sternest conviction, that when you counsel the destruction of the present social order, and advocate International Government as a means of avoiding war, you are making yourself the laughing-stock of the Eternal.

It is plain from this reply of yours to Mr. Churchill that you have never troubled to form any definite plan, even on paper, of the series of stupendous operations by which your new social order

is to be set up, and by which some form of Collectivist and Internationalist government is to be established somewhere. Clearly the destinies of millions of mankind would be involved, and vast movements of various peoples and races would have to be directed and coordinated. You assume their perfect amity of cooperation, and obedience to perfectly wise, honest, and unselfish leaders. You recognize, my dear Wells, don't you, that whether or not these extended and complicated operations are successful in establishing your International Collectivist State, they will at least be successful in breaking up the British Empire. You do recognize that, don't you? It is what you desire, and what you are working for. I propose to show you, my dear Wells, that while the breakup of the British Empire is possible, and even probable if a sufficient number of its citizens embrace your theories,—while this is possible, the establishment of International government is impossible within any period of time that it is worth while for us to attempt to measure.

I will now lay down a series of propositions, statements, and conclusions for your guidance, and for the guidance of those whom you are misguiding on these great matters. I shall not in this place defend any of them by lengthened arguments and explanations, as I have already examined them and minutely

reasoned upon every one of them in my "Patriotism and Popular Education"—see the fifth chapter, called "Patriotism and Internationalism." If I now advance any proposition that you wish to challenge or deny, please read that chapter carefully, and you will find yourself answered, not by vasty vague abstract phrases, but by a chain of clear connected arguments. It is open to you to refute any of my arguments, or to dispute any of my conclusions, and to prove that I am wrong. It will not be open to you after this to spread class hatred and disunion, and to vent mischievous unworkable theories that tend to the disintegration of the British Empire, and to the annihilation of all social order.

. . . . .

There are on the face of the earth some fifty more or less distinct nations, communities and tribes, living under more or less distinct forms of government. These fifty nations have more or less distinct and opposing separate national interests. Every one of them is always more or less in collision, or in competition with some of the others for the possession of fertile territory, commercial gain, dominion over inferior races, or for some other material or fancied advantages, or for the land or sea power which will put them in a position of superiority to their neighbours in the constant struggle for the possession of these advantages.

These fifty nations are composed of men of the widest differences and antagonisms of all sorts—in race, in colour, in intellectual capacity, in bodily capacity, in religion, in habits, in morals, in adaptability to opposite climatic conditions, in adaptability to varying forms of civilization, in adaptability to citizenship in any prescribed and enforced form of civilized government. This opposition of national interests is perpetual and universal. You are not dealing with a homogeneous herd of men. You cannot gather together in one flock this great human zoo and pipe them into your International sheep-fold by playing to them on your Pan's pipes a selection of vasty vague phrases about a "coming supremacy of order and justice." The more you try to drive them all into your International sheep-fold, the nearer you bring them all to its gates, the more opportunities you will give them of tearing each other into pieces. Look around, my dear Wells. Open your eyes. POP! Awake, awake to facts! See Internationalism actually in operation, everywhere the agent of disunion, disorder, and internecine strife, everywhere spreading the anarchy that ends in the most brutal militarism. Watch the developments of Internationalism in Russia. If you would spare mankind the curse of ceaseless warfare, I beseech you to allow the diverse human herds to remain in the families and groups that they naturally tend to form, under the diverse governments

that the most capable and strongest amongst them can establish over them.

. . . . .

'Tenshun now, my dear Wells, while I give you in four words the master key to the present world situation.

Patriotism is an instinct.

Patriotism cannot strictly be called a virtue, since a virtue is a habit that is obviously advisable for men to practise for their own individual good and interest, or for the good and interest of others. A healthy man has considerable liberty of choice whether or not he practises a certain virtue. It is largely an affair of his reason, his discretion, his will. But an instinct is a driving force within him which often compels his obedience against his reason, against his knowledge, against his will, and against his own good and interest.

Still less is Patriotism a political opinion, something which can be determined by voting. This is the common error. In England for the generation before the war, Patriotism was esteemed to be a vicious political opinion which led the nations into war, and was therefore to be voted down. When the war came, Patriotism proved itself to be an irresistible instinct, and swept the country.

Patriotism is the instinct of collective self-preservation in a nation. Nations that are without it, or are poorly endowed with it, succumb to their

rivals and perish. It is a universal instinct. I shall presently show you, my dear Wells, that you, yourself, are richly endowed with a spurious kind of Patriotism.

Patriotism is incipient in every tribe, in every clan, in every community, in every family. It springs up vigorously as soon as any class or race of men find that they have common interests to defend. The brand new republic of Panama is already ebullient with Patriotism, and so are the new nations of Europe.

The primary instincts are so necessary to the individual, or to the family, or to the race that Nature gives them all in excess. In this excess they are often unreasonable, unreasoning, absurd, unscrupulous, mischievous, and dangerous to their possessors. Patriotism has these defects like all the other primary instincts. It has other defects of its own. It is often boastful and blatant, over-reaching, and sometimes runs to a destructive megalomania, as with the Germans. Seeing that Patriotism often exhibits these bad qualities, many worthy people seek to abolish it, not perceiving that it is one of the primary instincts and cannot be abolished.

Some time ago I was betrayed into a heated argument upon the nature of Patriotism with a Pacifist, a very violent quarrelsome Pacifist. He was a small aggressive loud-voiced person, with a round head which contained an incessant tongue that poured out

much vasty vagueness. He trumpeted violent denunciations of Patriotism, holding it accountable for all of the evils that have recently befallen the world, and demanding its instant abolition that we might settle down to universal perpetual peace. I pointed out that Patriotism is a universal primary instinct; that though it often manifests itself in undesirable and mischievous ways, yet being an instinct, it is impossible to root it out of human nature. If we could utterly destroy Patriotism tonight, it would spring up afresh all the world over tomorrow, would draw into unity any group of men that had racial affinities and common interests to defend, and after much bloodshed, would mould them into a nation.

I argued on these lines, giving him solid undeniable facts and instances, and appealing to his reasoning faculties. He did not reply to me with argument, any more than you do, my dear Wells. He called me a liar, and other abusive names—a most pugnacious Pacifist, a most bellicose Pacifist. He thumped the table with his fist, and waggled and rolled his round head, and blazed out in fresh execrations of Patriotism. I grieve to say that I also got excited and angry, as I produced more facts, more evidence, more arguments. I showed him Patriotism as a living universal force, working behind all the great world movements, and directing them. He merely vociferated—the round head waggled and shook with obstinate denial of fact

and argument—I paused for a moment and looked at that round waggling head—by a sudden illumination I became aware that it was not a head at all, but a turnip, a veritable turnip placed on the top of his neck and shoulders.

I do not say that it was an ordinary vegetable turnip. It was connected by ligatures with his digestive and respiratory organs, and doubtless certain processes of a more or less cogitative nature went on inside it. But for all purposes of ratiocination, so far as regards all power of comprehension of sovereign facts, and their coordination with eternal laws and principles, it was a turnip. After a shock of surprise which took away my breath, I rushed out of the room. I had wasted a good hour arguing with a turnip. But it looked very much like a head.

Speaking of this experience with one of our leading surgeons, he told me in confidence that autopsies reveal to them that large numbers of our population possess these quasi-heads. Medical men jealously guard this fact as a professional secret, not wishing to wound the self-esteem of their patients. The man who has a human turnip growing on the top of his shoulders, never suspects that it isn't a real head. Indeed the outer semblance is perfect. The incident I have related made so powerful an impression upon me, that whenever I happen to see a bunch of turnips outside a vegetable shop, I hurry away for fear that they may begin to denounce Patriotism, and that I

may become involved in an argument with them. How many precious hours we waste arguing with turnips!

No doubt, my dear Wells, Patriotism has its unwise manifestations and excesses which have often worked much mischief in the world. So has the sexual instinct. War itself has not wrought more ravages, wrecked more homes, destroyed more lives. But very few of us propose to abolish the sexual instinct on that account. My Aunt Julia indeed is so obsessed with the contemplation of the wholesale evils attendant upon its excesses and irregularities, that she is forming a League for its total suppression. By the way, my dear Wells, my Aunt Julia is a great admirer of yours. She reads everything you write, and daily spreads your fame broadcast among her large circles of acquaintances.

If then we recognize that Patriotism is not a political opinion, but is a permanent universal instinct, we get a clue to the cause of the present confusions and disorders of the world, and also a clue to the only way that will lead the nations out of chaos, and enable them to settle down into something approaching peace and prosperity. It is useless to try to root out a universal instinct. As fast as we stamp it down, it springs up again. Instead of trying to suppress it, we must seek to turn it into its legitimate channels, and keep it from overflowing its lawful bounds. I would have you notice, my dear

Wells, that as your Collectivist theories are met and defeated by the permanent instinct of individual self-preservation, so your International theories are met and defeated by the permanent instinct of national self-preservation, that is, by Patriotism.

. . . . .

'Tenshun once more. POP!

Pacifism and Internationalism are perverted forms of the universal instinct of Patriotism. The Pacifist seeing the evils and miseries and horrors of war, votes himself into citizenship of a country where war is impossible. He naturalizes himself in that country; feels the same affection for it that the ordinary citizen feels for his own country; distorts his whole mental vision in favour of his imaginary beloved land; works for it, is ready to fight and die for it. There is no such determined Patriot as your convinced Pacifist. He automatically becomes the enemy of his own country, which in his view is always governed by wicked men whose "vision is smeared with blood." He therefore brims over with Patriotism for every country but his own. He is a multiple, universal Patriot.

Internationalism is another perverted form of Patriotism. The Internationalist, seeing that his own country and every country in the world is imperfectly governed by men who make mistakes, who are short-sighted and faulty in many ways,—seeing this deplorable state of affairs, the Internationalist

vilifies and abjures his native land, and enrolls himself as a citizen of a world state where there is a "supremacy of justice and order," where men are free from "error and passion," where there are "sane adjustments" against earthquakes, and where omelettes grow on every tree.

The Internationalist throbs with a passionate Patriotism for this delightful world state. He distorts or ignores or denies all facts that lie in the way of its realization. Though his chief accusation against our present civilization is that it leads to war, yet he welcomes and invokes an incalculable amount of bloodshed and fighting for an Internationalist State. Seeing that his own government is one of the obstacles to its establishment, he inflames himself against his native land, brings false charges against its rulers, seeks to undermine the social order under which he lives, and which alone protects him from anarchy.

You, my dear Wells, offer us a conspicuous example of this perverted Patriotism. Read again your papers on Russia. See how eager you are to condone the worst crimes of Bolshevism because it is an attempt at International Government. Your heart warms towards Lenin, though you say he is a rotten little incessant intriguer who ought to be killed by some moral sanitary authority. Never mind that. He is a brother Patriot in your International State. Again, all through the same papers

you show a spirit of rancid hostility to the British Empire. You bring constant accusations and insinuations against its rulers. While you laud and admire the Bolshevist leaders, and sympathize and fraternize with them, you have nothing but disparagement and blame for English statesmen. All this, my dear Wells, is Patriotism gone astray, the perversion of the wholesome instinct which stirs the normal man to love his country; to love its very soil as the clay which has moulded him and his fathers and the mighty men who have begotten their breed within its borders, and have made it a home for him and his children; stirs him to find excuses for his country's faults as he would find excuses for the faults of his mother; to be jealous for its honour and dignity as for the honour and dignity of her that bore him; stirs him to take a pride in his country's achievements because they have been wrought by his own blood and kin; stirs him to maintain and fortify the inheritance that has been bequeathed to him, and to strive that it shall not be impoverished and diminished and taken away from his children.

Thus works the wholesome instinct of Patriotism in the normal man, and by its operation, nations are preserved from internal disruption, and from defeat and destruction at the hands of their enemies. Internationalism is inverted and perverted Patriotism. You, my dear Wells, have the instinct of Patriotism fully developed, but it works the wrong

way, towards the insecurity and disintegration of your own country. Reverse the engines of your mind, and become a loyal British citizen. Compared with Internationalist Russia, England isn't such a very bad country to live in. You don't feel inclined to hum a bar or two of the National Anthem, I suppose?

The first six notes of "God Save the King."

International Patriots have an enormous advantage over National Patriots. A National Patriot can offer to his discontented fellow citizens no better land to live in than their own country where, as is obvious to all of them, they are not receiving their deserts. But an International Patriot can offer to every man who is dissatisfied with his present condition, a title of citizenship in a land where everybody gets his deserts, which is perfectly governed and administered by perfectly wise, honest, unselfish comrades who are free from "error and passion"—a land where there is a perpetual "supremacy of order and justice," and where the most delicious succulent omelettes grow on every tree for everybody to pluck. Now you know, my dear Wells, why these International Paradises are so attractive, and why their promoters are so popular.

* * * * *

'Tenshun once more! POP! I have one more unpalatable dose of plain indisputable truth which I must invite you to swallow. If you reject it, none the less will it be the truth.

International good will and amity and the benefits to all nations which are to be obtained from general kindly International intercourse, can only flow through the channels cut by National Patriotism. The desperate need of the world today is that a strong enduring national government should be set up and confirmed in each of the capital cities of the respective countries. Facilities for external trade, mutual concessions and civilities, offers and offices of friendship, a clearly defined foreign policy, international arrangements of all kinds, must be conducted in each country by the agency of a national government.

If that government is not firmly established, if it does not speak with the authority of the nation, if it is not supported by the general voice of all its citizens, no international arrangements that it enters into can be valid and binding, no international good understanding can be obtained. Now a government is secure and is favourably placed for entering into international negotiations and thereby establishing international good will and amity, in proportion as a wise and resolute Patriotism of its people rallies them to support it. So much sober stedfast Patriotism in a nation, so much power it gives to its

government to enter into stable international relations that make for peace and good will on earth.

Without this general Patriotism behind it, the foreign policy of any government must helplessly flounder towards international confusion and disorder. When, my dear Wells, you go to Russia and hobnob with an enemy of your country who is sending money to corrupt its navy,—when you ask support for his crazy tyrannical government and defame your own, you are not merely adding to the insecurities and dangers that beset your own country, you are also stirring up International strife. It is Internationalism, as you will find, that leads to "war and war and more war." It is Internationalism in Russia that is today the chief hinderer and disturber of the world's peace. It is Internationalism that is the great enemy of international amity and good will amongst the nations. Firmly established governments in each capital of the world, that is, governments supported by the Patriotism of their respective peoples, are the only agents that can promote and diffuse peaceable and friendly and brotherly international intercourse all the world over.

Retire into your chamber and ponder these matters.

Patriotically and therefore Internationally yours,

HENRY ARTHUR JONES.

March 11, 1921.

LETTER SEVENTEEN.

GATHERING UP THE FRAGMENTS.

My Dear Wells,—

In Aristopia the constant misuse of abstract words and phrases was found to work such evil in the social and political economy of the nation that it became necessary to enact stringent legislation to prevent it. The Court for Assessing the Value of Abstract Words and Phrases is the largest and busiest division of the Aristopian Palace of Justice. Every man who uses an abstract word or phrase without being able to define the exact sense in which he uses it, and to justify its use in that sense, is instantly taken before the Court, and after a fair hearing, is heavily fined according to the measure of his offence. The worst delinquents, and all coiners of mischievous abstract phrases and terms, are sent to prison without the option of a fine.

My old friend Professor Sophologos, who is Chief Corrector of wrong opinions in the National University of Aristopia, told me the other day that the very large amount of personal and civic liberty which he and his fellow citizens enjoy, can be traced to the fact that for two generations past no Aris-

topian has been allowed to use the word "Liberty" without being called upon to explain definitely and concretely what he means by it.

I was sitting down to lunch when Sophologos called, and I asked him to join me. I had beside my plate a copy of your reply to Mr. Winston Churchill on Bolshevism. Being unable to obtain a cocktail before my meals in America, I use your article as an aperitif. I find that a few hearty chuckles over its absurdities greatly assist my digestion. After lunch, I handed your article to Sophologos to read, and lighted a cigarette while I watched its effect upon him. As he advanced into its fallacies and nebulosities, and got deeper and deeper into its vasty vagueness, his face darkened into sterner and yet sterner frowns. From my intimate acquaintance with what he was reading, I could give a good guess as to which of your fallacies or inconsistencies was provoking his displeasure. By the time Sophologos had finished reading it, his face was a mask of grave and scornful disapproval. He laid it upon the table, and for some seconds sat silently regarding its headline, "The Anti-Bolshevik Mind." At length he uttered this brief comment:—"If any Aristopian had written that paper, he would have been sent to prison for the remainder of his life."

I have now perhaps made sufficient tests of the quality of your thinking in this reply of yours to

Mr. Churchill. It has proved to be a valuable Wellsometer. There are in its 537 lines many more sentences and phrases and passages which temptingly offer themselves to be unstripped and operated upon. But I must refrain. Sufficient unto the day is the amount of vasty vagueness that we have already dissected.

In the comparative absence of high comedy from our English stage, I find a satisfactory substitute in contemplating the magisterial attitude you adopt towards poor Mr. Churchill, and the lofty tone of the reproofs you administer to him. In your majestic cocksure philosophic dignity of bearing towards him, you show yourself to be sublime—or at least, not more than one step removed from it.

Nothing in the whole paper pleases me more than your portentous declaration, "Mr. Churchill has an undisciplined mind." You say so. You talk, my dear Wells! You talk! You have told me with the same severity of indiscrimination that I also have "a hasty ill-trained mind." You say so. Everybody who opposes you has an undisciplined or a hasty ill-trained mind. Do you mind my pointing out to you that you do not settle a question that is in dispute by telling your opponent that he has an "undisciplined" or "a hasty, ill-trained" mind? That may seem to you a convenient way of escaping from argument, and of course if you find yourself floored, you may as well say that as anything else. Nevertheless

it is a bad habit, my dear Wells, akin to your other bad habits of flatly contradicting yourself, and of making the most monstrous assumptions and assertions without any foundation for them. Try to cure yourself of all these bad habits. I should like to feel that in our next controversy, you will arouse me to some energy of response, and force me to a good stiff tussle with whatever reasoning powers you may discover yourself to possess.

We will now put your reply to Mr. Churchill—The Anti-Bolshevik Mind—upon a handy shelf, keeping it within reach for ready reference as we may find future need to explore it more thoroughly. We will again briefly summarize it as containing:

17 lines of doubtful argument upon the matters in dispute.
165 lines of detraction and abuse of Mr. Churchill.
149 lines of illogical advancement of your own theories.
206 lines of unclassifiable generalities and irrelevancies.

537 lines—TOTAL.

Throughout my examination of this truly "amazing" paper of yours, I have not been concerned to defend Mr. Churchill. So far as you have attacked his personal character, it is his own affair. So far as you have attacked his political opinions, motives, aims and actions, I have only to inquire how he answers the one supreme question before our nation today, "Shall we put into opera-

tion unworkable International theories and break up the British Empire, bringing upon ourselves the misery, horror and chaos that must inevitably follow any attempt to establish an International government; or on the other hand, shall we gather ourselves in a sober resolute Patriotism to consolidate the British Empire, forgetting for the time our internal dissensions and class hatreds, and bending all our efforts to establish ourselves in unity and security, that our national government may be an effective instrument for promoting International good understanding and good will among the peoples of the earth?"

With regard to that question, if Mr. Churchill were ten times the bold bad man you make him out to be, I should still think it most fortunate that he, and not yourself, has a share in guiding our national affairs.

Parenthetically, I read in this morning's papers that the reprehensible "Anti-Bolshevik mind" is developing very rapidly over all Russia, and making furious manifestations of its vicious activity. Petrograd is reported to be in flames, and there are wholesale massacres on both sides. You will remember, my dear Wells, that you hold two flatly contradictory opinions about Bolshevism. You tell us that it is a formidable force which will overwhelm our world civilization unless we subsidize it and keep it in power. You also tell us that it is a small negligi-

ble movement conducted by rather amiable persons —a harmless temporary little outbreak which will die out if only we don't make a fuss about it. You might tell us which of these two contradictory opinions you happen to be holding for the moment, in view of the present Russian situation.

You also told us that the Bolshevist government was firmly established and was likely to endure. With equal emphasis, you told us that it was by no means firmly established and that it behoved us to make haste and prop it up. The astounding capacity of your giant mind that has room in it for all these opinions at the same time!

Either Bolshevist government will endure or it will not endure. As you have prophesied both things, whatever happens I shall be able to congratulate you on the fulfilment of one of your prophecies. Well, well, we will put you and Mr. Churchill on the shelf for the time. Which of your numerous philosophical writings would you like me to examine next?

You will have noticed that this reply of yours to Mr. Churchill not only gave us a measure of your capacity to think for other people, but it also gave us an unusually good opportunity to search and scrutinize your cherished theories. Frankly, my dear Wells, what do you think of these theories of yours, in the light that I have thrown upon them? If you will pass them in thoughtful review, calmly, dispas-

sionately, impartially weighing them in your mind, I am sure you will come to the conclusion that essentially they are the crude theories of a rebellious shop assistant with a confessed tendency to arson,* and a fatuous loquacity about the supremacy of justice and order; with a woeful continuity of hatred against his own country, and a woeful discontinuity of argument to justify that hatred; active for the dissolution and destruction of our present social order; impotent and bankrupt for the construction of any social order whatever. Isn't that the way your theories now strike you? Yes, that's just the way they strike me. And it is upon the basis of "thinking" such as I have analysed that we are asked to break down the present social order, and destroy the British Empire!

We do not allow unqualified persons to treat the human body, to prescribe for its ailments, and to operate upon its vital organs. We see that a long practical training is necessary for anyone who charges himself with the care of the health of his fellow men. If we find a man practising medicine without any knowledge of the organs of the human body and their functions, we clap him into jail.

A nation is a social organism, self-contained and individual; dependent upon the cooperation of all its organs and functions to the one supreme end of

*"*I would have set fire to that place (his employer's shop) if I had not been convinced it was overinsured.*"—H. G. Wells, *Russia in the Shadows.*

maintaining and continuing its existence. Its instinct of self-preservation is called Patriotism. It is as delicately balanced, as cunningly coordinated in its thousand intricacies and interdependencies of organ and function, as the human body. Yet we allow any noisy ignorant quack of the market place to doctor this infinitely complex social organism, and to operate upon its vital organs. And instead of clapping him into jail, we permit him to continue in practice, and sometimes make him a Right Honourable.

The worst quacks of all are those who are now persuading the sickly pain-wracked nations to rejuvenate themselves into one compact wholesome social body by putting themselves into the International mince-meat machine. The International mince-meat machine chops and grinds them to pieces one after the other as they come between its teeth. Don't take my word for this. See the process in actual operation. See the latest news from Russia. See every nation in the world shaken and divided against itself, its industrial and economical activities paralyzed, hastening towards civil war and anarchy in exact proportion as International Theories spread amongst its citizens. "Not without blood" as you observe, will these International theories of yours be carried into action. What a glimmering you had there, my dear Wells!

The multiplication of railways and aeroplanes and swift communications bringing the various inhab-

itants of the earth into closer intercourse with each other, does undoubtedly offer them facilities for better understanding and for good will and amity *according as certain individuals and certain nations amongst them have common palpable interests, or ties of blood.* But no development of the means of communication, no universal railway, or telegraphic, or aerial service, will ever turn a Chinaman into a white man. Nor do you change a negro's nature to your own by sitting in a tramcar beside him and talking about universal brotherhood. So far and so long as men have radical antipathies and opposing main interests, the multiplication of swift communications gives them better opportunities for fighting each other, as well as better opportunities for understanding each other.

The evil result of all this quackery is that we are diverted from searching into the true causes of our social and international maladies, and from applying effective remedies to such of them as are remediable. When the quack is busy pushing his panacea, the true physician is flouted and driven from the door. How long it was before we learned in treating the human body that the symptoms are not the disease itself, but a warning of the disease. We have yet to learn the same hard lesson in treating the social organism.

Clinically yours,

HENRY ARTHUR JONES.

March 16, 1921.

LETTER EIGHTEEN.

THE WELLS LEAGUE.

My Dear Wells,—

I have two pieces of news to communicate to you. One of them is good news, and will give you just cause for delight and pride. The other is bad news, which will give you some qualms, and will demand your very serious consideration. I will impart the good news first.

I have mentioned that my Aunt Julia is one of your most constant readers and most devoted admirers. I don't think you have ever met her, but I daresay she has written you copious pages of her grateful appreciation. My Aunt Julia possesses inexhaustible energy; physical, vocal, epistolary, domestic, parochial, social, municipal, general advisory and universally superintendent. She has sat upon (in both senses) more committees, and organized more societies than any man or woman who ever lived. She is of no certain age. She is perennial. Her figure is short and stout and has no undulations. It was obviously made to fit a succession of intractable suits of clothes of a plain stubborn material. Her features are square, immobile, and

impervious to the wear and tear of life. She generally wears a velvet toque, shaped like a pork pie.

I am a man of few prejudices and quirks, yet I must own that I have an unconquerable aversion for my Aunt Julia's toques. I hate them almost as much as I hate your theories. Now there is good reason why I should hate your theories, my dear Wells, as I hope I have sufficiently shown. But there is no reason why I should hate my Aunt Julia's toques, except that I always see them above her face.

The good news that I have to convey to you is that my Aunt Julia has formed a Wells League to rally and consolidate your admirers and gather them into a cult. The sole qualfication for belonging to the Wells League is that the candidate is unable, or is indisposed, to think for himself, and is desirous of having his thinking done for him. There is no charge for membership. There is no liability or tiresome obligation of any kind. Everything is optional, except the simple initiatory rite of renouncing the troublesome business of thinking for oneself.

Aunt Julia is giving all her abundant energy to the organization of the League. Members are enrolling in almost countless numbers. The overwhelming response of both sexes and all classes has astonished me. Yet when one recalls how severe, how painful, how fatiguing is the effort to think for oneself, it is not to be wondered at that the great

majority of our fellow citizens should hasten to relieve themselves of this burdensome and vexatious exercise. Aunt Julia has made the wise provision, that although members of the Wells League relinquish all pretensions to think for themselves upon abstract and complex matters, they shall not be debarred from talking about them. Indeed they are to be encouraged to discuss and debate them on all occasions. She judges that this provision will ensure the League permanent popularity and attractiveness. She has also designed a neat little metal badge of membership. It is oval in shape, and its motto—"WELLS THINKS FOR ME"—runs round its edge, and encircles a portrait of yourself in the appropriate attitude of "thinking for half Europe." Members will be expected to wear the badge on all convenient occasions. Aunt Julia pronounces the badge to be "very pretty and artistic." She is one of those who use the word "artistic."

Aunt Julia perceives that this great increase in the numbers of people who have to be "thought for," calls for a corresponding increase in the number of people who will have to think for them. She therefore contemplates the foundation of a "Wells Institute of Thinkers for Other People," to supplement the activities of the Wells League, and to provide an enormous amount of mental pabulum of a quality that can be assimilated without the least exercise of thought. She has inspected several sites for the

erection of the Wells Institute, and has fixed upon one that adjoins the grounds of the Idiot Asylum at Earlswood in Surrey. She hopes that you will undertake the general supervision of the Wells Institute of Thinkers for Other People, and train its professors. And of course she has nominated you as President of both the League and the Institute.

So much information I have been able to glean from Aunt Julia about her plans for perpetuating your system of social and political philosophy. Wishing to give you a pleasant surprise, she enjoined me to secrecy, but I could not refrain from communicating the good news to you.

And now, my dear Wells, I must prepare you for the reception of a piece of bad news that I fear will sadly mar, and perhaps annul all the pleasure you have felt in hearing about the Wells League and the Wells Institute. I regret to tell you that every day Archibald Spofforth grows more and more infuriated against you. Sometimes he sits in his chair muttering threats and imprecations. At other times he rages up and down the room, shaking his fist, and using most unseemly language in denunciation of your theories. From the first, Spofforth has placed himself towards your theories in the wholly disrespectful attitude which Subtle assumes towards Face in the opening lines of the "Alchemist." Lat-

terly he has grown more violently abusive, and seems unable to control his indignation from passing into some active manifestation. In vain do I urge him to have patience with you, to copy my own moderation and gentle persuasive manner towards you. I point out to him that you have occasional glimmerings, and that I have every hope of ultimately making a good British citizen of you. Spofforth remains implacable and relentless. At times I almost hear him sharpening his knife.

I think it only friendly to warn you of the dangerously explosive state of Spofforth's feelings. There is something to be said in explanation, if not in justification, of his inveterate animus against you. Spofforth hates, loathes, execrates, detests, despises, abhors, abominates, extravasates, eviscerates, confounds, conspues, condemns and consigns to eternal bottomless perdition, all people who think for other people upon any subject before carefully thinking it out for themselves. That is Spofforth's idiosyncrasy, stated in the fewest words. You see, my dear Wells, you have touched Spofforth on the raw.

I do not wish to cause you unnecessary alarm. I may be unduly anxious about you. Spofforth may not carry out his threats. You may be sure he shall not, if I can restrain him. But I do advise you to be constantly on your guard. For the present it will be better for you to keep silence on all social and

political problems. This will give him time to cool down. Beyond this, I think you will be wise to take some measures to propitiate Spofforth.

I know that your first impulse will be to call him "an out-and-out liar," or a "silly ranter," or an "excited imbecile." Don't do that, my dear Wells. I don't in the least mind your applying these terms to myself. In fact, I like it, since it gives me a pleasing security that you cannot meet my arguments. But you mustn't take that tone with Spofforth. It wouldn't be *safe* in the present state of his feelings towards you. Spofforth isn't a mild-mannered, easy-tempered man like myself, disposed to let you off lightly, and always ready to give you a pat on the back, and say, "Brave lad!" when you get an occasional glimmering.

No, you must try other tactics with Spofforth. You do see how necessary it is for you to appease him, don't you? First, there is your personal safety to be considered. Then I suppose you intend to go on thinking for other people, and to promulgate more theories as fast as they come into your head. You don't want Spofforth to be always lying in wait to tickle you with what he calls his Ithuriel fallacy-piercer. You want to have a quiet undisturbed time to formulate a world policy for the yellow races, or to prophesy the ultimate absorption of Buddhism by the Salvation Army, or any other gigantic

apocalyptic romance that happens to strike your fancy.

Now what shall we do to mollify Spofforth? You won't of course attempt to argue with him. If I have any influence with you, my dear Wells, let me implore you not to pit your argumentative powers against Spofforth. Argument isn't your strong point. You recognize that, don't you? But you are a dandy-cock at theory. Let us put our heads together and fix up some theory that will offer an excuse for your grievous errors and fallacies, and dispose Spofforth to a more tolerant and lenient frame of mind towards you.

I suggest we should tell Spofforth that your brain works in that way; that in thinking virulently against your country; in stirring disaffection, and sowing the seeds of revolution amongst those who are unable to think for themselves; in accusing all rich men and all powerful men of dishonestly intercepting wealth and influence that belong to others; in shaking the foundations of social order; and in spreading unworkable theories that tend to the disintegration and dissolution of the British Empire—in all these matters you are helplessly under the control and direction of certain particles in the convolutions of the gray matter of your cerebrum, which particles vibrate in a certain manner and cause you to give utterance accordingly.

I know it isn't a very good excuse. In fact, it's a very bad excuse. But can you think of a better one? If you offer that explanation, I don't see what Spofforth can say in reply. He can't possibly prove that your brain doesn't work in that way. And if your brain does work in that way, it is plainly useless for him to get angry with you, and to work himself into these ungovernable rages against you. With your permission then, I will offer that explanation to Spofforth, and will try to induce him to accept it.

I hope you will take my mediation with Spofforth as a proof of my own desire to open an easy way for you, as time goes on, and as your cerebral processes undergo some salutary changes, to become a good loyal attached citizen of the British Empire. In this spirit of good will towards you, I subscribe myself,

Hopefully yours,

Henry Arthur Jones.

March 19, 1921.

LETTER NINETEEN.

A CHALLENGE.

My Dear Wells,—

I have now examined with great care and minuteness the quality and texture of your thinking upon the gravest matters that are shaking and perplexing the minds of men all over the civilized world. Incidentally I have also examined your economic, Collectivist, and International theories and have inquired upon what foundations they rest of solid facts and actual forces at work in the world we are living in. If I may make a rough generalization, I will say that in dealing with all these complicated questions, you do not deduce your theories from facts; you deduce your facts from your theories and force them to fit. If at times I have seemed to trifle, and play carelessly round all these deadly serious questions, that is not because I have ceased, even for a moment, to apprehend their sovereign exigence and importance. While this has been always in my mind, my attention has yet been frequently diverted to the aspect of amusing and crazy absurdity which your theories offered to my

examination. Let me recall one instance out of the many that I have pointed out.

You tell us in your fifth paper that it was not until you visited Russia and saw the widely spread destitution there, that you perceived that the abolition of marketing and shopping and of private property caused nine-tenths of the houses and buildings in any town to become useless heaps, and to dissolve away. What became of the inhabitants did not seem to trouble you. You had to journey to Russia before you could open your mind to this perception. It came upon you as a revelation. Surely it is what every man possessing an ounce of common sense can perceive at a moment's glance. Well, you received this revelation in the Kremlin. How has it affected your theories? Do you still advocate the abolition of private property?

My dear Wells, it is by reason of "thinking" such as yours, carried into governmental action by your co-thinkers aand co-theorists, that civilization has almost perished in Russia, and that its hapless people have endured their three years' terrible martyrdom. It may well be that by reason of "thinking" such as yours, carried into governmental action by your co-thinkers and co-theorists, that the British Empire will be shaken till it cracks at its centre, and that our own countrymen may fall for a season under a brutal military despotism, kindred to that which has starved and pillaged Russia and sacrificed mil-

lions of the lives of its workers. In the measure that your theories are carried into operation will they surely produce the same effect in Britain that they have produced in Russia.

I cannot think that you have set yourself for one single hour to study these questions with the determination to follow your theories to their inevitable consequences. You complacently advocate the abolition of private property and the destruction of the present social order. You evidently desire the disintegration and dissolution of the British Empire, and its absorption in some Collectivist International State. You stir your fellow citizens to work for the attainment of these ends. You claim to do this in the interests of the working classes, that they and their children may take possession of the wealth and influence which rich men have stolen from them.

Have you ever tried to disengage your mind from your theories, and for one quiet hour to think apart from them? Have you ever tried to picture the reactions all over the world that would follow the break-up of the British Empire? Have you ever tried to realize what would be the consequences to the British working classes for whose benefit you counsel its dissolution? They would turn and curse you. For be sure there can be no easy, gradual, peaceful, dissolution of the British Empire. "Not without blood" will it be accomplished, as you yourself discern. It would be the British working classes

who would bear the brunt of that tremendous world disaster. Upon them and their children would be visited the heaviest sufferings and calamities. Be quite sure of that. Do you wish me to prove it to you?

I cannot believe that you have ever sat down with a clear unbiased mind to weigh and consider all these matters that flow so glibly from your pen. I cannot believe that you have resolved, first to tell yourself the truth about them, and then to tell that truth to those who accept you as a social and political guide. Surely if you had taken the trouble to search carefully into these matters, and to weigh your judgements before you delivered them, you would have avoided the worst of the flagrant self-contradictions, inconsistencies, and fallacies that I have exposed.

Throughout these letters I have allowed myself the utmost freedom and plainness of speech. In this I am justified by the supreme importance of the questions in dispute between us. On all these tremendous questions it is urgent that our nation should come to a decision. Our future security and prosperity depend upon our giving a right answer to each one of these questions.

Upon all these tremendous questions, you and I are in irreconcilable opposition. Now it matters little, my dear Wells, what theories and opinions get into your head, or into mine. The world's course is not guided by your theories and opinions, or by my

theories and opinions. The world's course is guided by great changeless laws and principles, that are everywhere and always in operation, that silently but irresistibly rule men with an iron compulsion, whether or not they are aware of it. At every moment of our lives, in every relationship of life, in the family, in the tribe, in the school, in the workshop, in the office, in the city council, in the senate, in the state, in the international comity of nations, these changeless laws and principles incessantly repeat to every one of us their stern immitigable command, "This do, and thou shalt live."

The world is turned upside down today, my dear Wells, because men have disregarded and disobeyed these merciless irrevocable laws and principles, and have followed your new kind of honesty, and what you call "modern ideas." It is a very old world, my dear Wells. Men have not lived in it all these hundreds of thousands of years without discovering these primal changeless laws and framing them into codes. From of old these laws have been known, have been more or less obeyed, have guided the usages of all civilized societies, and have kept the world more or less in order. Men and nations may dodge and disobey these changeless laws and principles for a time, and for a time escape the consequences. But they take their terrible revenge, alike upon the innocent and guilty.

For instance, Lenin has just discovered that there

are certain immutable economic laws which govern the distribution of wealth, and the allotment of food and the necessaries and comforts of life. He is reported to say that agreements with bourgeois governments are indispensable. He is giving a grant of concessions to capitalists and to farmers, *"who must own their own land."* What damnable heresy is this, that a private person shall be allowed to own land, especially if he has worked for it and earned it! *Allowed to own land!!* Land of all things! Then there is reason to hope that men will be allowed to own other desirable things which they have worked for, and have practised self-denial to obtain! But what will be the end of these concessions to common sense?

After remarking that no one was so mad as to expect a world revolution, Lenin screwed up his eyes in a comical manner and said, "I fear I have become respectable!" Well may you call him an "amazing little man." With some droll histrionic talent too! "I fear I have become respectable." A most effective curtain line on that act of Bolshevism.

"Comrades!" we hear him saying, "we have had our three years' little picnic. Twenty millions or more of you have perished in dreadful misery! Millions more of you have been shot down without trial or tortured and imprisoned and hunted to exile, despair and death! Twenty millions of you are starving today! Comrades, I now begin to see the absurdity

of our theories! We will end this act of our grand economic international burlesque, and return to the realities of ordinary bourgeois existence"; adding in an aside to Trotsky, "or pretend to return to them, until we have got enough capital out of the bourgeois governments to keep our red army of four million men in the field."

It is here necessary for me again to remind you, my dear Wells, that in one of those rare glimmerings and perceptions of facts which you do occasionally get, you stamped Lenin as a "rotten little incessant intriguer, who ought to be killed by some moral sanitary authority."

A grave responsibility rests upon the English government for giving recognition to one whom, in a lucid interval, you so accurately described. No man, no nation, no government ever palters and compromises with manifest wrong, without risking the consequence of a terrible revenge from the operation of these changeless irrevocable laws. For, unlike your theories and your modern ideas, these changeless irrevocable laws do work, and do govern us, and do in one way or the other, constantly affirm their authority over us.

Certainly our hearts will heave a deep sigh of relief at the mere prospect that the hapless Russian masses will be delivered from the worst of tyrannies, the mad tyranny of false theories, the murderous despotism of false ideas. But what of the huge

national debt that Russia owes to hard set, impoverished, thrifty France? Is France, mutilated, devastated, depopulated France, with her ruined industries—France that is still crushed and staggering under the blows that she bore for Western civilization—is France to be cheated alike by German duplicity, and by Russian frank dishonesty? Russia, with her illimitable resources, will well be able, under sane government in the future, to repay the debt she owes to France. Is that debt to be enforced, or frankly repudiated by Russia? The clearest, earliest declaration on this crucial question is demanded from the English government. A secure and prosperous France is the first assurance for a secure and prosperous British Empire, and for the peace of Western Europe. A cheated, bankrupt France is an assurance of immeasurable trouble and insecurity for England, and of perpetual disorder and dread of war. What has the English government to say about the repudiation of the Russian national debt?

Meantime, my dear Wells, you have announced that you will not argue with me. Instead of arguing with me, you call me an "out-and-out liar," a "silly ranter," an "excited imbecile." Your theories and views are widely held in England today. We have amongst us a group of busy writers, who, like yourself, are "thinking for" large masses of our fellow citizens, and who, like yourself, always "think" and write against their own country. Since you find

yourself unable to argue with me on these life or death questions, cannot you find some champion who will carry on the fight for you? The main questions upon which I have joined issue with you are these:

(1) The necessity of upholding the integrity, solidarity, and indissolubility of the British Empire as one of the chief guarantees against world disorder and anarchy.

(2) The impossibility of establishing any form of Collectivism without destroying all social order whatsoever.

(3) The impossibility of organizing any workable scheme of Collectivist finance.

(4) The necessity of a clear recognition of the rights of private property, as the only means of rewarding industry and ability.

(5) The palpable falsehood of affirming that all rich and all powerful men are dishonestly "intercepting the wealth and influence that other men have created for mankind."

(6) The deadly mischief of making such palpably false statements, and thereby inflaming class hatred at a moment when the safety of every man, woman and child in Great Britain, and especially of our working classes, depends upon our healing all our divisions, and standing together in the closest unity of national aim and effort.

I repeat that these are life or death questions.

Upon each of them, I am as strongly opposed to you as life to death, as white to black, as right to wrong. Upon each of them, our nation is called upon to make a quick and clear decision. I have no poor ambition to gain a verbal victory over you, my dear Wells. I am only desirous that our nation should arrive at a right decision on all these questions. I have been very plain-spoken and very explicit in making my statements and charges, and have supported them by a chain of carefully connected argument. Surely amongst all the writers who hold your theories, there is some one of them who can offer me a reasoned reply, instead of abuse and vasty vagueness? He shall find me very eager to give up any wrong opinion that I may be holding. I will not call him a "liar" or an "excited imbecile." I will thank him very courteously for putting me right. I throw down my glove. Who picks it up? You, sir? Or you? Or you?

Again let me assure you, my dear Wells, that I am not moved by any feeling of personal animosity against you. In your last communication, you wrote of my "incurable grudge," my "everlasting hooting and lying," my "dreary hostility," and of my heart being "full of malice." My dominant feeling towards you, my dear Wells, is plainly revealed by the tone of many of the lighter passages in these letters. That dominant feeling which I need not more clearly indicate, is largely mingled with amuse-

ment. It is therefore quite incompatible with any feeling of personal malice.

I do indeed believe that you are doing a great amount of mischief by your loose and confused thinking and your vasty vagueness. Before I began this controversy, I wrote you, and gave you my reasons for starting it. Your theories aim at the breaking up of the British Empire. I hope it will not seem incredible to you that this is a sufficient reason for my attacks upon them. You prove yourself a bad judge of character, my dear Wells, when you ascribe to personal malice what is only the performance of my duty as a good citizen of my country.

One evil of all this loose thinking upon these matters is that we blind ourselves to the plain stern fact that this will never be a world in which everybody can be made happy and comfortable, even under the best forms of government; even if we could all suddenly change our natures, and from this time constantly study to do our duty to our neighbours. There would still be collisions of interest amongst men, amongst the different social classes, amongst the different nations and races of the earth. Competition and cooperation in endlessly shifting forms, are one of those many balancing and compensating alternations by which Nature governs us, and disposes of us, and forces us to go the way she wants us to go. If we once get a firm hold of this universal law of balancing alternations, this per-

petual reversal and play of catabolic and anabolic forces in every social organism, we shall get a better apprehension of how little and how much we can do to remedy social wrongs and abuses. By our removal of one social wrong we often cause a reaction that sets up a greater wrong than the one we have tried to remedy.

A worse evil of all this loose thinking upon these matters, is that by adopting wrong remedies, (such as burning down employers' shops) we cease to search for true effective cures for such social and political abuses and wrongs as can be cured or palliated.

In some respects our present civilization is the most hideous that the world has ever known. There are many things in it that sadly need to be changed and some things that need to be destroyed. I do not seek to perpetuate the present social order. It must inevitably submit to vast changes. Let those changes be made in obedience to the changeless laws which underlie all social order. Whether a better general state of world civilization can be gradually brought about by our conscious efforts, will depend upon our getting a true knowledge of the laws of social structure, and very much more upon our getting them obeyed by the masses of mankind. I propose as soon as I can find time to these fundamental laws that underlie all social order, have a further talk with you, my dear Wells, upon

and that are always operative and compulsive upon every community, whether or not we are ignorant of them, whether or not we obey them.

You decline to argue about them with me? Well then, I shall again have to carry on our next controversy all alone. I daresay I shall be equal to it, and that I shall again be able to find arguments for both of us.

Yours in the meantime,

HENRY ARTHUR JONES.

New York City,
March 30, 1921.

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